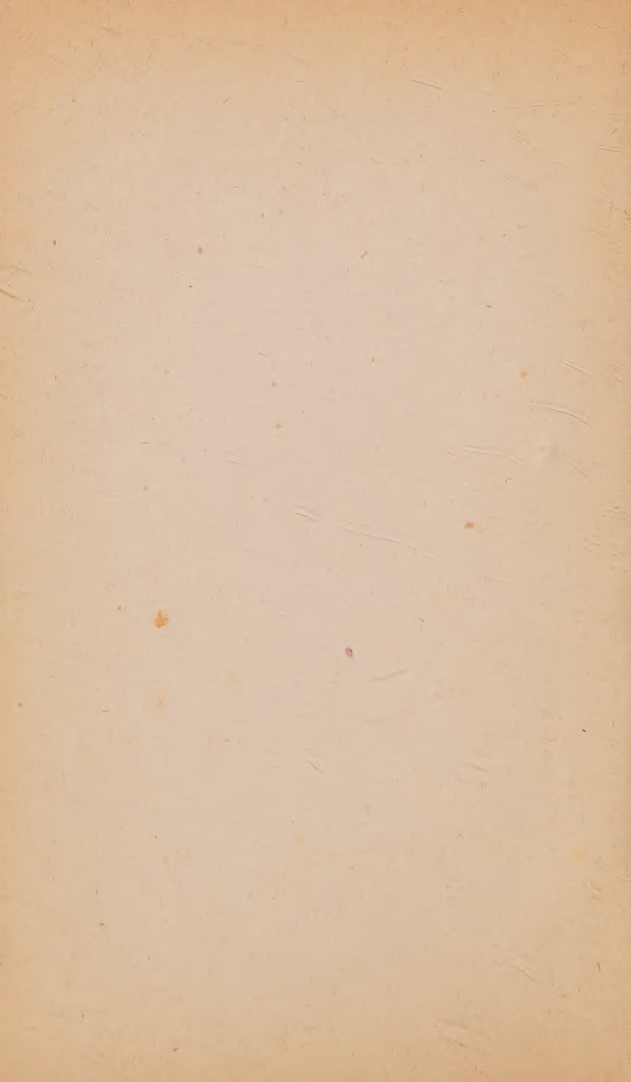



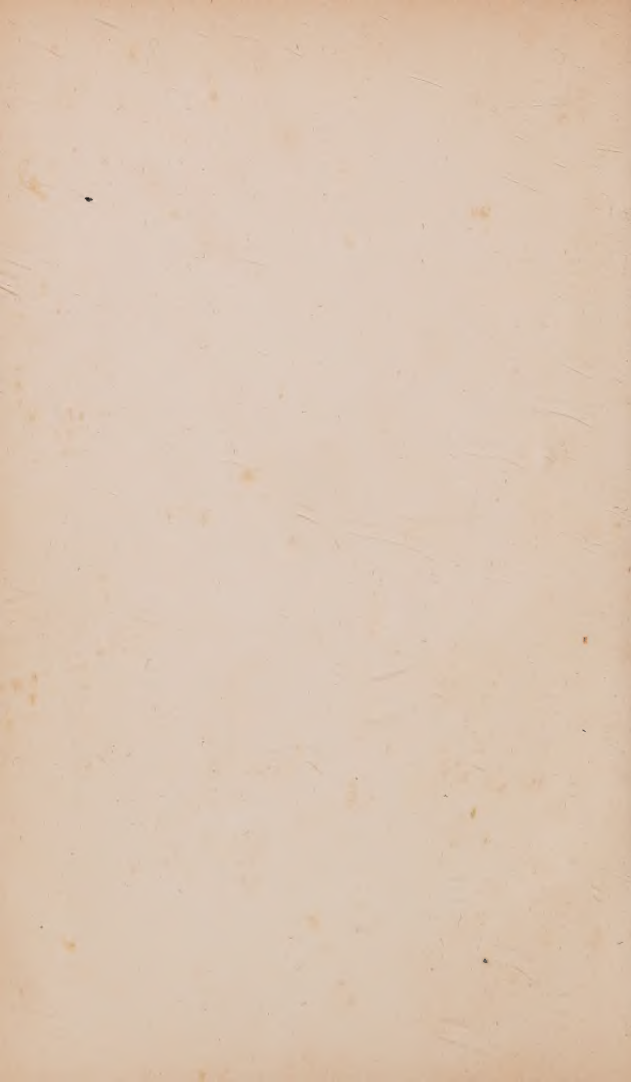
Mrs W. Beers.

or the rest of the family.





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Arab and his horse.





Sarah Wallace

THE ARAB

AND HIS COUNTRY.



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THE ARAB.

CHAPTER I.

INTERESTING ASSOCIATIONS WITH ARABIA—THE COUNTRY DESCRIBED—SOIL AND CLIMATE.

THE associations connected with Arabia are more sacred and abiding than they can be with any country on the face of the earth, excepting Palestine. Here the patriarch Job is supposed to have passed his life, darkened by affliction and brightened by prosperity. Moses, a stranger and a shepherd, beheld in this land the bush that burned with fire, but was not consumed. Arabia afforded an asylum to Elijah from relentless persecution. It presented, too, the memorable scene where Divine power and mercy were displayed in the journeyings of the Israelites, after their deliverance from Egypt. They were to pass through a waste, howling wilderness to Canaan, the land promised to their fathers. Never was there—never will there be again—such a pilgrimage as theirs. They had

“ A cloud to measure out their path by day,
By night a fire to cheer their gloomy way,
That moving signal summoning when best
Their hosts to move, and when it stayed, to rest.

For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,
The dews condensed became angelic food;
Themselves secured beneath the Almighty wing,
Their God their Captain, Lawgiver, and King."

Burckhardt (who is supposed to be as well acquainted with the modern inhabitants as any European traveller) has remarked, that even "the sacred history of the children of Israel will never be properly understood, so long as we are not minutely acquainted with every thing relating to the Bedouin Arabs,* and the countries in which they move and pasture." We enter, therefore, on a consideration of these circumstances, persuaded that in so doing a valuable light will be cast, not only on general knowledge, but on sacred literature.

"After a tedious passage from India," says one, "we entered the straits of Jabal, and few countries present themselves to the imagination of the traveller under circumstances so well calculated to awaken a deep and lasting interest as those around us. From the earliest dawn of history, the northern shores of the Red Sea have figured as the scene of events which both religious and civil records have united to render memorable. Here Moses and the patriarchs tended their flocks, and put in motion those springs of civilization which from that period have never ceased to urge forward the whole human race in the career of improvement. On one hand, the valley of the Wander-

* A volume entitled the "Bedouin Arabs," is published by the American Sunday-school Union, and will be found both instructive and entertaining.

ings, commencing near the site of Memphis and opening upon the Red Sea, conducts the fancy along the track pursued by the Hebrews during their flight out of Egypt; on the other hand are Mount Sinai, bearing still upon its face the impress of miraculous events; and beyond it that strange, stormy and gloomy-looking sea, once frequented by Phœnician merchant ships; by the fleets of Solomon and Pharaoh; and those barks of later times, which bore the incenses, the gems, the gold and spices of the East, to be consumed or lavishly squandered upon favourites at the courts of Macedonia or Rome. But the countries lying along this offshoot of the Indian Ocean have another kind of interest peculiar perhaps to themselves; on the Arabian side we find society much what it was four thousand years ago, for amidst the children of Ishmael it has undergone but trifling modifications. Their tents are neither better nor worse than they were when they purchased Joseph of his brethren, on their way to Egypt; the Sheiks possess no other power or influence than they enjoyed then; the relations of the sexes have suffered little or no changes; they eat, drink, clothe themselves, educate their children, make war and peace, just as they did in the days of the Exodus. But on the opposite shore all has been change, fluctuation and decay. While the Bedouins have wandered with their camels and their flocks, unaspiring, unimproving, they have looked across the gulf, and beheld the Egyptian overthrown by the

Persian ; the Persian by the Greek ; the Greek by the Roman ; and the Roman in his turn by a daring band from their own burning deserts—they have seen empires grow up like Jonah's gourd. War has swept away some ; the vanities and luxuries of peace have brought others to the ground ; and, in short, every spot along these shores is celebrated."

The entire surface of Arabia is estimated to be about four times that of France. Considered generally as pertaining to Asia, it appears from its position and physical character rather to belong to Africa. But for the narrow interruption of the Red Sea, one almost continuous tract of sandy deserts would extend from the shores of the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. Indeed, Arabia has been compared to "a coat of frieze bordered with gold," since the only cultivated or fertile spots are found on its confines—the intermediate space being filled with arid and sandy waste.

The name of Arabia, in its proper acceptance, comprehends the peninsula as far as the isthmus which runs from the northern extremity of the Gulf of Akaba to the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab. In a more extensive sense, it is made to comprehend also a large tract north of the isthmus, reaching as far as the river Euphrates on the east, and the south-eastern angle of the Mediterranean on the west.

In early times, the Hebrews included a part of what we call Arabia among the countries they vaguely designated "the East." Thus,

Abraham is said to have sent away the sons of Hagar and Keturah to the east country, which appears, in this instance, to have been the northern division of Arabia. The patriarch Job is described as the greatest of all the men of the East; and, though opinions differ as to the precise locality of the land of Uz, yet it is commonly agreed that it was in some part of Arabia. In the book of Judges, among the allies of the Midianites and Amalekites, (tribes of the north,) are mentioned the children of the East, which Josephus translates by the Greek word for Arabs.

The Arabs divide the great wilderness of the Arabian Desert into three parts, and denominate them according to their proximity to the respective countries. One part is designated *Badiyah-el-Irak*, (Babylonia,) and from this word (*Badiyah*) comes the name of the nomadic tribes by whom it is traversed—*Bedawees*, better known to us by the French corruption of *Bedouins*. These people are not, however, confined to this part of Arabia, but roam throughout the entire region.

Various speculations have arisen as to the derivation of the term Arab, but the most obvious one is from the Hebrew "*Arabah*" which signifies in general a steppe, a plain, or desert place. It was, in point of fact, the name given by the ancient Hebrews to the tract of country extending northward from *Elath*, on the Arabian Gulf, to the Dead Sea, and even as

far as the Lake of Tiberias.* In the list of the cities of Judah, contained in the book of Joshua, we find,† in the wilderness, “Beth-Arabah,” that is to say, “the house of the plain.” It had been described‡ as on the northern borders; and hence,§ it appears as a city of Benjamin, one of whose boundaries, it is said, passed over against (the) Arabah northward, and went down into (the) Arabah. It is a remarkable circumstance, that the southern part of this great valley is still known by the name of Wady-el-Arabah, and it appears probable that this designation, which was applied so early as the days of Moses to one particular district, was gradually extended to the entire region.

Of this the early geographers mention only two divisions—Happy and Desert Arabia. But after the city of Petræa, in Idumæa, had become celebrated as the metropolis of a commercial people, a third division was denominated Arabia Petræa, or Stony Arabia. Ptolemy flourished in the second century: and this threefold division, which occurs first in his works, has obtained throughout Europe ever since.

Arabia Felix, or the Happy Arabia, has been supposed to derive its name from the variety and richness of its natural productions, as

* Josh. xii. 3.

† In the 6th verse.

† Josh. xv. 61.

§ In chap. xviii. 22.

compared with those of the other divisions. It lies between the Red Sea on the west, and the Persian Gulf on the east: its northern boundary being an imaginary line drawn between their respective northern extremities, Akaba and Bussora. It thus includes by far the greater part of the country known to us as Arabia, which continues to the present day only imperfectly explored.

Desert Arabia takes in that portion of the country which lies north of Arabia Felix, and is bounded on the north-east by the Euphrates, on the north-west by Syria, and on the west by Palestine and Arabia Petræa. So far as it has been explored, it appears to be one continuous, elevated, interminable steppe, intersected occasionally by ranges of hills. The chief elements of the soil are sand and salt, which yields stunted and thorny shrubs, or thinly scattered saline plants; but in many places it is entirely bare.

Arabia Petræa embraces all the northern and western portions of the country, being bounded on the east by Desert and Happy Arabia; on the north by Palestine and the Mediterranean; on the west by Egypt, and on the south by the Red Sea. Many European travellers have lately visited this portion of Arabia, and it is consequently much better known than any other part.

The whole peninsula of Arabia, so far as at present explored, consists of an elevated tableland, declining on the north towards the Syrian Desert, and encircled along the sea-coast with

a belt of flat, sandy ground. The flat country, beginning at Suez and extending round the whole peninsula to the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab, is called Gaur, or Tehâma, a name which means the "low land," from which the mountainous region in the interior is distinguished by the appellation of Nejd, the "high land."

The soil of Tehâma, from its regular inclination to the sea, as well as from the large beds of salt, and the coverings, or other parts, of marine animals, with which it is interspersed, appears to have been once a part of the bed of the sea. Still the sea on the western coast continues to recede; the reefs of madrepora and coral, which abound in the Arabian Gulf, and in some parts rise sixty feet above the sea, are increasing and coming nearer to the shore. The intermediate space, too, is gradually filling up with sand, and the Tehâma is on that side constantly extending its limits. An early writer, (Arrian,) mentions Muza as a sea-port of Arabia Felix: it is now several miles distant from the sea. Lord Valentia describes the harbour of Jidda as being formed by innumerable reefs of coral. In the southern part of the Arabian Gulf, the banks of this substance are less numerous. As it is soft and easily wrought, this marine production is preferred to all others for the purpose of building. Most of the houses in Tehâma are constructed of this material; and hence it has been said, that "each one is a cabinet of natural history."

The low land of Arabia is occasionally for

many years destitute of rain, but sometimes it is scantily watered by slight showers during the months of March and April. In the arid tracts the dews are said to be copious. The high land has its regular rainy season, which begins about the middle of June, and continues till the end of September. Springs also abound in the loftier mountains, which, when fed by the copious annual rains, send streams of water through the valleys that descend to the Tehâma, where the fertility of the soil depends mainly on irrigation.

The sky in these deserts is generally cloudless; but the burning heat of the sun is moderated by cooling winds, which often raise fearful tempests of sand and dust. We read in Scripture of "the east wind," and "the wind from the desert," which is probably the simoom, a word Anglicised from the Arabic word, and meaning "poisonous." Such blasts, however, seldom occur in the southern parts of Arabia; they are chiefly experienced in the tract between Bussora, Bagdad, Haleb, and Mecca. Even there they are dreaded only in the hottest months of the year.

These winds seem to derive their noxious qualities from passing over the great sandy desert when scorched by the intense rays of the tropical sun. Ali Bey states, that at Jidda, "the north wind, traversing the desert, arrives in such a state of dryness, that the skin is parched, paper cracks as if it were in the mouth of an oven, and the air is always loaded with sand.

If the wind changes to the south, every thing is in the opposite extreme: the air is damp, every thing handled feels of a clammy wetness, and the atmosphere appears to be loaded with a sort of fog." The nature of the winds, therefore, seems generally to differ according to the tract over which they have passed.

The entire population of the Arabian Peninsula is computed at about ten millions, and it is supposed that this is considerably less than the number of its inhabitants in ancient times, as many ruins now exist of depopulated towns and villages.



CHAPTER II.

VEGETATION OF ARABIA—THE COFFEE-PLANT—THE DATE-PALM—ANIMALS OF THE COUNTRY—THE GAZELLE—THE ASS—THE HORSE—THE CAMEL—REPTILES—POISONOUS SERPENTS.

NEITHER the soil nor the climate of the greater part of Arabia is favourable to vegetation, and consequently the plants cannot be so varied or abundant as in many other lands. So intense, indeed, is the heat of the sun, that the flowers are frequently withered as soon as they bloom. There is, however, a considerable number of plants common to colder and warmer regions. The Arabs cultivate many of the culinary vegetables with which we are familiar. Wild pumpkins and melons are used as food for camels. Melons raised in the field are so plentiful, that, for some part of the year, they are the chief article of food to the people of all ranks. Just before the fruit is ripe, the rind is pierced, the apertures filled with wax, the melon is left on its stalk, and the pulp is changed in a few days to a delicious liquor.

The sandy plains yield some agreeable objects to the eye of the traveller, and plants which alleviate the thirst of the camel in its long and wearisome journeys. Content with a dry and hard fare, these animals browse with pleasure on prickly herbs and shrubs. One kind, which the camel rejects, is eaten by the

ass. Another plant is prepared by the Bedouins as bread, and they eat it as readily as we do the best produce of our fields. Here, too, is a favourite soil of the rose of Jericho. Lavender, marjoram, and pinks may also be gathered, while lilies appear adding their charms to the scene.

Some flowers are gorgeous, large, and of the brightest hues. It seems strange, but is nevertheless true, that the peasants in many parts of Arabia, whom we should think indifferent to such objects, array themselves on festive occasions with chaplets and garlands, according to ancient and widely-spread customs.

Nor is Arabia without plants which are of special service. One, of insignificant appearance, yields an abundance of alkaline salt, which bleaches linen, and is employed by the common people instead of soap. Other shrubs are burnt into charcoal for the market at Cairo. The indigo-shrub is universally cultivated for the blue it yields, which is the favourite colour of the Arabs. The infusion of a gray-coloured herb, when mixed with a certain quantity of meal, is used as a leaven to ferment both bread and beer, and to them it adds an agreeable flavour. The common Kali grows in great abundance on the coasts, and in the islands of the Red Sea. A sort of bullrush, or panic-grass, is used for roofing houses, which, as rains are infrequent, is sufficient as a covering. One kind of field-reed attains the gigantic height of twenty-four feet; it is very plentiful near

Suez, and is an article of commerce, being sent to Yemen, where it is employed in ceiling houses.



THE COFFEE-PLANT.

If Arabia Felix is not the native country of coffee, it is the favoured spot where this plant arrives at the greatest perfection. It is a production of the highest value. Some say it is a native of Upper Ethiopia, whence it was introduced to Arabia; others consider it an aboriginal of Yemen. Bruce maintains that it grows spontaneously in Abyssinia, being found wild in the greatest abundance from Caffa to the banks of the Nile. In that country, indeed, it has been considered to be cultivated from time immemorial; and the same author tells us, that the Guilæ, a wandering tribe of Africans, in their incursions into Abyssinia, being obliged

to traverse immense deserts, carry with them nothing to eat but coffee, roasted till it can be pulverized, and then mixed to a consistency that will permit of its being rolled up in balls and put into a leathern bag. One of these, about the size of a small ball, keeps them, they say, in strength and spirits during a whole day's fatigue, better than a loaf of bread or a meal of meat. The more probable supposition is, that coffee was brought into Arabia from Abyssinia, and it does not appear to have been used commonly as an article of refreshment until about the middle of the fifteenth century. It was then introduced at the city of Aden by a mufti, who found that it dispelled the drowsiness which interfered with his duties. It soon became very popular, and pervaded Mecca and Medina, where coffee-houses were opened and frequented by crowds, whose tumultuous recreations scandalized the strict votaries of the Koran. In the beginning of the sixteenth century it was brought to Cairo, and was drank even in the mosques. This innovation gave rise to a bitter controversy. In 1511 it was publicly condemned at Mecca by the body of muftis, lawyers, and physicians, as contrary to the law of the prophet, and alike injurious to soul and body. At Cairo, in 1523, it was anathematized from the pulpits; the shops were burned, the saloons were shut, and the keepers pelted away with their pots and cups. Selim I. reversed all this—put down the tumults, and pronounced coffee orthodox—to enforce his sentiments he

had recourse to an argument very usual with sultans, and proved the virtues of coffee by hanging two Persian doctors who had asserted that it was injurious to health. From Cairo it passed to Damascus, Aleppo, and Constantino-ple, and found its way by degrees into Europe. Thevenot brought a small quantity to Paris as a curiosity in 1657, and in 1672 a coffee-shop was opened in that city by an American. The price was about half a dollar a cup, and meeting with opposition from the physicians, want of customers obliged him to remove to London. Charles II. endeavoured to suppress these establishments as nurseries of sedition ; but in a few years they became general throughout the country.

The coffee shrub is an evergreen, twelve or fifteen feet in height. Its flowers resemble those of the jasmine, and are very fragrant. When the blossom dies, the fruit appears in its place, green at first, but red and resembling a cherry when ripe—in the centre of this lies the bean, enclosed in a thin membrane, and easily separated into two halves. There are two or three crops in the year, and it is quite common to see fruit and flowers on the same tree ; but the first produce is the best. May is the proper harvest month. The berries are shaken from the branches on cloths spread to catch them ; they are then dried in the sun and the husk separated from the bean by a heavy roller.

We can, at best, form but a very incorrect idea of the quantity of coffee consumed, from

what is exported to Europe; for all Arabia yields to Europe annually only 1,500,000 lbs. weight, while St. Domingo has in one year exported 71,665,187 lbs., Surinam 15,387,000 lbs., and other American islands, and even Persia and Suez, have greatly exceeded in export the quantity derived from Arabia.

The coffee-plant, as we have said, grows to the height of fourteen or fifteen feet, with a stem four or five inches in diameter. The Mocha coffee, as the seeds of the berry cultivated in Arabia are called, is distinguished from the coffee of other countries by the roundness and smallness of the grain; the reason of which is, that one of the two seeds in the berry is abortive, and the other assumes a rounded form, for want of the mutual pressure that would otherwise have been given. The superior quality depends partly on the time and manner of gathering Mocha coffee, and still more, perhaps, on the soil and site chosen for the cultivation of the plants. The best sort grows on the mountains of Hadje, about sixteen miles east of Beit-el-Fakieh, a spot of which we have a description in the first volume of *Voyages en Arabie*, by Niebuhr. "My travelling companions," says he, "whom I had expected to find at Hadje, were in the gardens on the mountain where the coffee grows. I followed them thither the next day, taking nearly an east-south-east direction, towards Kusona; and I overtook them at Balgose, one of the villages

which principally depend for subsistence on the culture of coffee. Neither asses nor mules can be used in climbing these mountains: it is necessary to ascend the steep places by a road, which, being only mended at wide intervals, is extremely bad. To me, however, who had just quitted the arid and sandy plains of Tehâma, where I had been accustomed to walking, it appeared delightful, as I was surrounded on all sides by gardens, which formed the principal plantations of coffee.

“It was only near Kahlma that I had seen a single hill of those long and pentagonal stones that I witnessed in other places, but here a great portion of the mountain seemed to consist of this sort of stone: the detached rocks, likewise composed of it, presented a striking appearance, especially where water was trickling from the summit of the rocks, and formed cascades, which appeared as if supported on little upright columns. It is easy to detach these stones from the rocks, and they are used to make steps on the road, as well as for the walls with which it is needful to prop up the gardens where coffee is grown, on the slope of the mountains; from which it appears that these stones are very serviceable to the inhabitants of this hilly country.

“The tree that produces coffee is well known in Europe. It was covered with flowers near Bulgose, which diffused an agreeable scent. All the gardens are situated on platforms, one above another. Some are only watered by

rain; in others there are large reservoirs on the higher parts, whence the running water is conducted and distributed over all the beds, where the trees are grown so close together that the sun cannot make its way between them. We are told that the trees thus artificially irrigated bore fruit twice a year, but that the beans ripened only once; those of the second crop, which did not attain to complete maturity, being inferior to the first."

All the Arabs are extravagantly fond of coffee; and the general mode of preparing it greatly improves its flavour. They do not grind it in a mill, but reduce it to an impalpable powder in a close mortar, thus better expressing and preserving from evaporation the oily particles of the berry, and giving to the decoction a peculiar relish. They are also very particular in preparing the beverage, which all classes use without milk or sugar.

As an illustration of the manner in which they regard the use of sugar, the following incident may suffice. A group of Bedouins were once disputing about the sanity of Lady Hester Stanhope; one party strenuously maintaining that it was impossible a lady so charitable, so munificent, could be otherwise than in full possession of her faculties. Their opponents alleged that the assimilating herself with the Virgin Mary, her anticipated entry with our Saviour into Jerusalem—and other vagaries attributed to her, were proofs to the contrary. An old man with a white

beard called for silence, and a call from the aged among the Arabs is seldom made in vain. She is *mad*, said he; and lowering his voice to a whisper, as if fearful such an outrage against established custom should spread beyond his circle, he added, "for she puts sugar to her coffee." This was conclusive.

People of rank drink coffee out of porcelain cups; their inferiors employ a coarser ware; and in some places it is served up to travellers in small earthen pots like bottles, which contain from ten to fifteen cups. Mr. Lushington observed, when a lady paid a visit to any one at Mocha, she carried on her arm a little bag of coffee, which is boiled at the house where she enjoys the society of her friends, without putting them to any expense! The Bedouin prepares his coffee as rudely as he provides for himself in other ways.

Burckhardt describes gum-arabic as the produce of the talh. He says that the Bedouins in some parts feed their camels on the thorny branches of this shrub. They collect the gum in summer, and sell it at Cairo for about three or four dollars the hundred weight. The taste is insipid, but the substance appears to be very nutritious. An Abyssinian caravan, indeed, crossing the African desert to Cairo, finding their provisions exhausted, had recourse to gum-arabic, of which they had a considerable quantity, and upon this alone one thousand persons subsisted for two months.

The plants of Arabia endowed with a medi-

cinal property must not be overlooked. Here appears, indeed, the first curative means which were applied by the Arabs, at a remote period, with signal success. Thus they discovered and used plants as counteractive of poison, to which they were exposed, from the bite of venomous animals which infested their country. The prickly caper is considered an effectual antidote against all kinds of poison. That which we call the Senna of Alexandria is sold by the natives at Mecca and Jidda, whence it passes by way of Egypt to the Mediterranean ports. Other plants familiar to us are also used by the Arabs.

The almond, fig, and walnut trees are, in Arabia Felix, of enormous size; and so thickly does the fruit cluster on the orange and the lime, that at times only a small part can be gathered. Such spots present, indeed, an extraordinary scene, and one unequalled in any other part of the earth. "Of this," says Lieutenant Wellsted, to whom we are indebted for much valuable information, "nothing can furnish a more striking idea than the list of their productions, all of which are frequently reared on a plot of ground not more than three hundred yards in diameter; and I can confidently state, that no equal space, in any part of the world, will afford a catalogue more numerous and varied, more luxuriant in growth, and more perfect in form."

One tree is entitled to special notice; it is the date-palm, the fruit of which constitutes the



The Date Palm.

staple nourishment of the Arabs during the greater part of the year. Some places have a peculiar use for this produce, but almost every district has its own variety. Upwards of a hundred different sorts are said to grow in the immediate neighbourhood of Medina. The cheapest kind is the *heleya*, a very small date about the size of a mulberry: it equals in



A BUNCH OF DATES.

a, cluster of fruit; *b*, barren flowers; *c*, fertile flowers; *d*, barren flower opened, displaying six stamens; *e*, fertile flower, with six imperfect stamens; *f*, three fruits of one flower in their early stage.

sweetness the finest figs from Smyrna, and when dried, is covered, like them, with a saccharine crust. Another, the *birni*, is esteemed the most wholesome and easy of digestion. It was a favourite with Mohammed, and he recommended the Arabs to eat some of these dates every morning before breakfast. Dates are dressed in a variety of ways; they are boiled, stewed with butter, or reduced to a thick pulp by simmering in water, over which honey is poured. The Arabs say that "a good housewife may furnish her husband every day for a month with a dish of dates differently prepared."

Nor is this all. The timber of the date-palm serves for rafters or firewood, the fibres for cordage, and the leaves for cages, baskets, boxes, cradles, and even bedsteads. The kernels, after being soaked in water, for two days, until they become soft, are given as food to camels, cows, and sheep, instead of barley, than which they are considered more nutritive. There are shops at Medina where nothing is sold but date-stones; and in all the main streets beggars are occupied in picking up those that are thrown away.

On the coast of the Indian Ocean, the date trees form a continuous grove for a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, and the Arabs have a saying that a traveller may proceed the whole distance without ever losing their shade. Notwithstanding their great number, every tree has its separate owner, and disputes between

the relations of those who die intestate are in consequence very frequent.

The Arabs rear in great numbers all the domestic animals common to hot countries. Their oxen and cows have a hump or bunch of fat on the shoulders immediately above the fore-legs. Buffaloes are found in the marshy parts of the country, and on the banks of the rivers, where they are more numerous than the common horned cattle. The male is as fit for the yoke as the ox, and the female yields more milk than the ordinary cow.

Of asses there are two kinds: one small,



THE ONAGER, OR WILD ASS.

sluggish, and but little esteemed; the other large, and high-spirited, which is sold at a considerable price. The onager, or wild ass, is distinguished from the domestic kind by the greater length and finer form of its limbs, its straight chest, and somewhat compressed body. The mane is composed of short erect hair; it is of a dusky colour, and rather woolly texture. The colour of the body is a uniform silvery gray, with a broad coffee-coloured stripe extending down the back, from the mane to the tail, and crossed on the shoulders by a transverse band, as in the domestic variety. Of this animal it is asked in the book of Job—

“ Who hath sent out the wild ass free ?
Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass ?
Whose house I have made the wilderness,
And the barren land his dwellings.
He scorneth the multitude of the city,
Neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.
The range of the mountains is his pasture,
And he searcheth after every green thing.”

The sandy plains and the valleys of the mountains are stocked with gazelles. Of these beautiful creatures poets have often written. The Arabs of the desert still follow them in the chase, and obtain from them a supply of food.

The Arabian horses are well known to be the finest in the world; but the idea that they are found wild in the desert, as asserted by the old writers, is now justly exploded. Major Smith is of opinion that this noble animal was aboriginal in Great Tartary. In no country is the horse more esteemed, or his faculties in



The Gazelles.

consequence more developed, than in Arabia. The wandering Arab of the desert places his highest happiness in his horses, and is so attached to them, that they are more his companions than his servants. It is by these tribes that nearly all the horses are bred; and they are known under two denominations—*kadeshi*, or horses of an unknown race, and *kochlani*. The latter describe those whose genealogy is known for two thousand years; this race, they assert, originated from the stalls of Solomon. To establish the genealogy of a *kochlani*, the greatest vigilance is employed, and such formalities and certificates are required, as defeat all attempts at imposition. The horses of this noble race are sold at enormous prices, but no consideration whatever will induce the Arabs to part with the mares. An Arabian horse will generally carry his master from eighteen to twenty leagues a day. These animals perspire little, and possess in the most eminent degree the qualities of endurance, vigour, and admirable temper.

The affectionate terms on which Arab families live with their horses sometimes occasions extreme regret when they are obliged from necessity to sell them. D'Arvieux mentions a Syrian merchant, who cried most tenderly while caressing his mare, whose genealogy he said he could trace for five hundred years. And the feelings of another, who had taken gold for a steed on which he had set an extraordi-

nary value, have been thus vigorously and pathetically described :—

“ My beautiful ! my beautiful ! that standest meekly by,
With thy proudly-arched and glossy neck, and dark and
fiery eye ;
Fret not to roam the desert now, with all thy winged
speed,
I may not mount on thee again—thou’rt sold, my Arab
steed !

“ Fret not with that impatient hoof, snuff not the breezy
wind,
The farther that thou fliest now, so far am I behind.
The stranger hath thy bridle-rein—thy master hath his
gold.
Fleet-limbed and beautiful ! farewell ! thou’rt sold, my
steed, thou’rt sold.

“ Farewell ! Those free untired limbs full many a mile
must roam,
To reach the chill and wintry sky which clouds the
stranger’s home ;
Some other hand, less fond, must now thy corn and bed
prepare,
Thy silky mane I braided once, must be another’s care.

“ The morning sun shall dawn again, but never more with
thee
Shall I gallop through the desert paths, where we were
wont to be ;
Evening shall darken on the earth, and o’er the sandy
plain,
Some other steed, with slower step, shall bear me home
again.

“ Yes, thou must go. The mild, free breeze, the brilliant
sun and sky,
Thy master’s house—from all of these my exiled one
must fly.
Thy proud dark eye will grow less proud, thy step be-
come less fleet,
And vainly shalt thou arch thy neck, thy master’s hand
to meet.

“ Only in sleep shall I behold that dark eye glancing
bright ;
Only in sleep shall hear again that step so firm and light :

And when I raise my dreaming arm to check or cheer
thy speed,
Then must I, starting, wake to feel—thou’rt sold, my
Arab steed !

“ Ah ! rudely then, unseen by me, some cruel hand may
chide,
Till foam-wreaths lie, like crested waves, along thy
panting side ;
And the rich blood that’s in thee swells, in thy indignant
pain,
Till careless eyes which rest on thee may count each
starting vein.

“ Will they ill-use thee ? If I thought—but no, it cannot
be,
Thou art so swift, yet easy curb’d ; so gentle, yet so free:
And yet, if haply, when thou’rt gone, my lonely heart
should yearn,
Can the hand which casts thee from it now, command
thee to return ?

“ *Return !* Alas ! my Arab steed ! what shall thy master
do,
When thou, who wast his all of joy, hast vanish’d from
his view ?
When the dim distance cheats mine eye, and through the
gathering tears,
Thy bright form for a moment, like the false mirage,
appears ?

“ Slow and unmounted shall I roam, with weary step alone,
Where with fleet step and joyous bound, thou oft hast
borne me on,
And sitting down by that green well, I’ll pause and
sadly think,
‘ It was *here* he bow’d his glossy neck when last I saw
him drink !’

“ *When last I saw him drink !* Away ! the fevered dream
is o’er,
I could not live a day, and *know* that we should meet no
more.
They tempted me, my beautiful ! for hunger’s power is
strong,—
They tempted me, my beautiful ! but I have loved too
long.

“Who said that I had given thee up? who said that thou wast sold?
'Tis false—'tis false, my Arab steed! I fling them back their gold!
Thus, *thus* I leap upon thy back, and scour the distant plains!
Away! Who overtakes us now, shall claim *thee* for his pains!’”

The love of the Arab for his horse is heightened by an ancient prejudice among them, that he is capable of generous feeling and is endowed with an intelligence above that of other animals. They think that Mohammed has obtained for him the blessing of God and an occult capacity to repeat every day some verses from the Koran. They were taught by their prophet that it was originally destined for their special service. “When God,” said he, “wished to create it, he called the south wind and said, ‘I desire to draw from out of thee a new being; condense thyself by parting with thy fluidity,’ and he was obeyed—he then took a handful of this element and blew on it, and the horse was produced. ‘Thou shalt be for man,’ said the Lord, ‘a source of happiness and wealth; he will render himself illustrious by ascending thee.’”

In Nejid, horses are fed on dates, or dates mixed with hay. The wealthier classes often give them flesh, raw as well as boiled; and sometimes, before the commencement of a long journey, they get roasted meat, in order better to endure fatigue. A native of Hamah told Burckhardt that to prevent the governor from seizing a favourite horse, he fed it for two

weeks on wasted pork, which excited it so that it became ferocious and entirely unmanageable, and was no longer coveted by the arbitrary ruler. In Egypt, horses which are accustomed to bite, are cured of their vicious propensity by suffering them to exercise it on a hot leg of mutton; the pain which this produces has the effect by a few repetitions of reforming their temper.

Of the service of the camel to the Arab, it is difficult to speak too highly. There are two kinds of camel, one having two hunches on its back, and the other, which is the Arabian camel, having but one. It is found in the countries extending from India to Arabia, and along the northern regions of Africa. It is frequently denominated the dromedary, but the term is not altogether applicable, the word being of Greek origin, and used in reference to the lighter and fleet breeds of both species, the one being to the other what the hunter is to the heavy draught-horse. The feelings with which the Arab regards the camel are peculiar. At the moment of its birth it is joyously welcomed with the exclamation, "another child is born to us." Should this happen on a journey, the Bedouin receives it in his arms, and for a few hours places it on the mother's back; but at the first halting-place the little stranger is put down to receive the parent's caresses, and ever after continues, unassisted, to follow her footsteps, and no training is required but proportioning the burden to their age. Kneeling is

their natural state of rest, and they assume the position voluntarily when about to be loaded. The great length of his neck enables the camel, without stopping, to nip the thorny shoots which abound on the desert, and the cartilaginous formation of his mouth prevents any difficulty from the thorns, though sharp and strong enough to pierce a thick shoe. These shrubs, with a few handfuls of dates or beans, are his ordinary food on a journey; in camp, the green stalk of the jowaree, and the leaves and tender branches of the tamarisk. In Southern Arabia they are fed on salt or fresh fish. The hump of the camel, which is round and fleshy when the animal is well fed, is absorbed, when he is suffering from famine, to supply the defect of nourishment, until little of it remains but its frame-work of bone and muscles. Its power of enduring thirst is stated at various periods of from five to nine days. These qualities, which enable both the camel and his master to subsist where otherwise existence would be impossible, justify the attachment of the Arab to his beast. A traveller, upon professing to doubt some cases of this attachment, says, "A party at this moment happened to be approaching from an opposite direction, and Hamed, somewhat nettled, proposed to test the truth of his statements by what I should witness. The parties approached—'May the Almighty break the legs of your camel,' bawled out Hamed to the foremost of the party, who was riding somewhat in advance. Without a moment's hesita-



MOUNTED ARAB.

tion, the stranger threw himself from his beast, and advanced sword in hand on Hamed, who would probably have had but little reason to congratulate himself on his experiment, if several of our party had not thrown themselves before him and explained the story. But the Arab still appeared deeply offended, and replied to all that was brought forward in explanation, by asking, why he abused his camel, and in what manner it had harmed him? The matter was adjusted by a few presents, and I passed on, determined not to trust again to an Arab's delicacy in settling a question of this nature."

So swift is this animal in his motion, that the Arabs, in their figurative description of him, say, "When thou shalt meet a *heirie*, and say to the rider *Salem alic!* ('Peace be between us!') ere he shall have answered thee, *Alic salem!* ('There is peace between us!') he will be far off and nearly out of sight, for his swiftness is like the wind." Seventy or a hundred miles a day, and continued in the same ratio for successive days, is by no means an unusual speed of travelling; and it is stated that six hundred and thirty miles have been performed in five days. The Chinese give him the appellation "of the camel with the feet of the wind."

The more common camel has been well denominated "the ship of the desert." Every part of his structure is suitable to the situation he is intended to occupy, some of the peculiarities of which it will not be superfluous to mention. The eye is protected by an overhanging lid; so that, while a keenness in its power of vision is allowed, protection from the heat of the sun is afforded. The fine particles of sand with which the air is loaded when the hot winds prevail, if not provided against, would occasion much pain to the camel, by impeding respiration. But this is obviated by the peculiar division of the nostril into slits, which he can close and open at will. Thus, by respiring gradually and gently, the suffocating mass is excluded, and the journey is continued as if there were nothing to occasion

interruption. Frugal, temperate, hardy, and strong, the deserts are traversed with comparative ease; and thus, while requiring little for his support, the camel bestows the greatest advantages on his master.

While goods are conveyed on his back, his side affords a shelter from a whirlwind of sand, or a pillow on which the weary head finds rest. Patient under his arduous labours, he treads the endless sands at the desire of his master, kneeling at his command, requiring no stick or spur to induce him to increase his pace, but encouraged by the Arab melodies which are cheeringly sung. And when age or accident has deprived him of life, his hair furnishes clothes and tents, and his skin is made into belts, sandals, saddles, and buckets.

The camel lives about forty years, but its strength declines after twenty-five or thirty. The wool is taken off the skin by the hand, about the end of spring—it seldom exceeds two pounds from each. They are branded in the neck, or left shoulder, with a ring, a cross, or a triangle, as the mark of the owner. When called home in the evening, every one knows its master's face, and, putting its own to his, drops down on its knees as if to ask for supper. The value varies from sixty to one hundred and fifty dollars.

Little opportunity has hitherto been afforded to examine the winged tribes of Arabia. In the fertile districts, however, tame fowls and all kinds of poultry are very plentiful. The ostrich

freely roams in the deserts. Several birds of prey have been observed by travellers, among which the vulture is of great service, removing carcases, which corrupt very rapidly, and also destroying the field-mice, which multiply so prodigiously in some districts, that, were it not for the vulture, the peasant would cultivate his fields in vain.

In some places the land-tortoises are numerous, as are also the lizard tribe. Scorpions abound in the deserts, still infesting the confines of Palestine as they did when the Israelites "passed through that great and terrible wilderness." Ali Bey saw one, of a sallow colour, and almost six inches long, in the great court of the temple at Mecca. Of serpents there are several kinds whose bite is mortal. It was while traversing the wilds "from Hor to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom," that many of the Israelites were destroyed by these venomous reptiles, for their rebellion against the Most High.

Happily we are exempted from such fearful judgments; but this is owing to the forbearance and mercy of God. Guilty as we are, we are "condemned already," if we believe not in the name of the eternal Son of the Father.

CHAPTER III.

MOUNT SINAI—TOWNS OF ARABIA—MUSCAT—BEDIAH—MINNA
—MECCA—MEDINA—THE CITY OF PETRA.

It is now desirable to glance at some of those places in Arabia which have a peculiar interest ; and certainly the spot where Jehovah gave his law to Israel claims our first regard. Lord Lindsay describes the ruins of the ancient town of Feiran—the Phara of Ptolemy the geographer, in whose time it gave its name to the Sinaite promontory—and which some have supposed to be the El Paran in the wilderness, to which Chedar Laomer and his associate kings chased the Horites of Mount Seir. He then proceeds:—"At the first turning after passing the ruined town, a most superb view of Gebel Serbal opened on us,—every crag and pinnacle of his five peaks relieved clearly against a sky of the most delicious blue, and perfectly cloudless ; the pale moon, about half full, sailing in the pure ether above us—the eye could pierce far beyond her. Gebel Serbal was of a bluish-gray, but the jagged rocks of the valley, forming the foreground of the picture, were black, the bright lights and deep broad shadows rendering them perfectly beautiful. I sat on my dromedary under a tarfa-tree, enjoying the shade and a delightful breeze, and talking with the Bedouins. And was that Mount Paran?"

- “ God came from Teman,
And the Holy One from Mount Paran.
His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of his praise,
And his brightness was as the light.
He had horns coming out of his hand;
And there was the hiding of his power.
Before him went the pestilence,
And burning coals went forth at his feet.
- “ He stood, and measured the earth :
He beheld, and drove asunder the nations ;
And the everlasting mountains were scattered,
The perpetual hills did bow.
His ways are everlasting !
I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction ;
And the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.
- “ Was the Lord displeased against the rivers ?
Was thy anger against the rivers ?
Was thy wrath against the sea,
That thou didst ride upon thine horses
And thy chariots of salvation ?
Thy bow was made quite naked,
According to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word.
- “ Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers :
The mountains saw thee, and they trembled :
The overflowing of the water passed by :
The deep uttered his voice,
And lifted up his hands on high.
The sun and moon stood still in their habitation :
At the light of thine arrows they went,
And at the shining of thy glittering spear.
- “ Thou didst march through the land in indignation,
Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.
Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people,
Even for salvation with thine anointed.”

Lord Lindsay afterwards refers to the different opinions entertained as to the precise spot where the Law was given to Moses, and then adds, “ Yet what, after all, avails the inquiry, if we think merely of the stage and not of the action performed on it? This is the wilderness of Sinai—there can be no doubt of

that; and, whichever the individual mount was, every hill around heard the thunder and quaked at the sound of the trumpet, waxing louder and louder as God descended in the cloud, and trembled at the 'still small voice,' that, deeper than the thunder, and high above the trumpet, spoke to every man's ear and heart that fiery law, holy, just, and good, existing from all eternity, which requires of man that spotless obedience which he cannot yield, and at the first transgression, even in thought, of its purity, lays himself under the curse of eternal death: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself."

"Many travellers who ascended Mount Sinai have found its summit enveloped in clouds; but I enjoyed the advantage," says a visiter, "of a clear, serene atmosphere, and was thereby enabled, by means of angles taken to the hills on the Arabian coast, ninety miles distant, to fix correctly the geographical position of the mount. Its height is ascertained to be seven thousand six hundred and thirty feet. The view comprehends a vast circle. The gulfs of Suez and Akabah were distinctly visible; and from the dark, blue waters of the latter the island of Tiran rears itself. Mount Agrib, on the other hand, points out the 'land of bondage.' Before me is St. Catharine, its bare, conical peak, capped with snow. In magnificence and striking effect few parts of the world can surpass the wild, naked scenery everywhere met with, in the mountain chain

which girds the sea-coast of Arabia. Several years wholly passed in cruising along its shores have rendered all its varieties familiar to me, but I trace no resemblance to any other in that before me; it has a character of its own.

“Mount Sinai itself, and the hills which compose the district in its immediate vicinity, rise in sharp, isolated, conical peaks. From their steep and shattered sides huge masses have been splintered, leaving fissures, rather than valleys, between their remaining portions. No villages and castles, as in Europe, here animate the picture; no forests, lakes, or falls of water, break the silence and monotony of the scene. All has the appearance of a vast and desolate wilderness, either gray, darkly brown, or wholly black. The feelings of the pilgrim who stands on Mount Sinai must be cold indeed if they remain uninfluenced by the objects before and around him. I know, but heed not, that skepticism has done its best to weaken or destroy the impressions such a locality should naturally inspire. Even if I do not stand on that identical spot of our globe which the presence of the Deity has hallowed once and for ever, I feel that I am at least near it; and few, I think, who gaze from its fearful height upon the dreary wilderness below, will fail to be impressed with the fitness of the whole scene for the sublime and awful dispensation which an almost universal tradition declares to have been revealed there.”

On the Gulf of Suez, about fifty miles north-

west of Mount Sinai, is situated the Gebel Makateb, or "Written Mountain," so called from the inscriptions which cover the part which faces the sea. In many places of this peninsula inscriptions have been found, but none of the same character. Instead of being rudely scratched, these seem to have been "graven with an iron pen in the rock," with care, in regular horizontal lines. Besides those in the ancient language, there are many in the Greek, Cufic, and modern Arabic. These are only the names of visitors, with frequently the addition of the figure of the cross to those in Greek. These most ancient inscriptions were at one time supposed to have been executed by the Israelites during the wandering. Under this expectation a reward of £2500 was offered by Bishop Clayton for a copy of these characters. This was before the invention of Daguerreotype, or the reward might have been earned without much trouble beyond that of travelling to the spot.

About a quarter of a mile from the Gebel Makateb stands the Gebel Narkous, or "Mountain of the Bell." It is about four hundred feet high, and presents a semicircle of broken and abrupt rocks of sandstone piled up in pinnacles. Against this rises, at an angle of forty degrees, an inclined plane of the finest sand, reaching almost to the top. The effect of disturbing this sand hill is thus described. "Seated on a rock at the base of this eminence, I directed one of the Bedouins to ascend,

and it was not until he had reached some distance that I perceived the sand in motion, rolling down the hill to the depth of a foot. It did not, however, descend in one continual stream, but as the Arab scrambled upwards, it spread out laterally and upwards, until a considerable portion of the surface was in motion. At their commencement the sounds might be compared to the faint strains of an Eolian harp, when its strings first catch the breeze; as the sand became more violently agitated by the increased velocity of the descent, the noise more nearly resembled that produced by drawing the moistened fingers over glass. As it reached the base the reverberations attained the loudness of distant thunder, causing the rock on which we were seated to vibrate; and our camels (animals not easily frightened) became so alarmed that it was with difficulty their drivers could retain them.

“On a spot so desert and solitary, this has an inconceivably melancholy effect, and the Bedouins trace it to several wild and fanciful causes. The tradition given by Burckhardt, that the bells belonging to the convent have been buried here, has often been repeated to me. That the explanation of the phenomenon is intimately connected with the agitation thus produced in the sand, can admit of no doubt; but the precise causes which lead to these results it seems difficult to explain.”

The town of Maskat, according to Wellsted, is situated at the extremity of a small cove,

in the gorges of an extensive pass, which widens from this point as it advances into the interior. On either side, the cove hills, to the height of from three to five hundred feet, rise almost perpendicularly from the sea, and appear lined with forts, which, considering they belong to the vicinity of an Arab town, are in a tolerable state of repair. The largest and most commanding are erected on either side, at the inner extremity of the cove; and within that on the western side state prisoners are confined. Two half-moon batteries also command the entrance: the guns appear well-mounted, and the guard at all seasons on the alert. The distance across from fort to fort is only half a mile; so that an attack in the day-time would be very difficult if these were well served.

To persons arriving from seaward, Maskat, with its forts and contiguous hills, has an extraordinary and romantic appearance. Not a tree, shrub, or other trace of vegetation is visible; and the whitened surface of the houses, and turreted forts in the vicinity, contrast in a singular manner with the burned and cindery aspect of the darkened masses of rock around. Similar in its aspect to most eastern cities when viewed from a distance, the level roofs of the dwellings, the domes of mosques, their lofty minarets, and other prominent features, are first discerned, but on landing the illusion quickly disappears. Narrow, crowded streets and filthy bazaars, nearly blocked up by porters bearing burdens of dates, grain, etc.;

wretched huts intermingled with low and paltry houses, the owners of which, seated on a small projecting part before their door, are merely sheltered from the heat of the sun by tattered canvas awnings; and other dwellings, more than half-fallen into decay, but which yet continue tenanted, meet the eye in every direction. There are, nevertheless, within the town several substantial, handsome houses; the palace of the Iman, and those belonging to the old prince and his mother, the governors, and several others, being of the latter description. The form of the edifices differs considerably from what is usually seen in the towns of Yemen and the Hedjaz, and partakes more of the Persian style of architecture.

Maskat is built on a slope, rising with a gradual ascent from the sea, where the water nearly washes the bases of the houses. This side has no defence, but the others are protected by a wall fourteen feet high, with a dry ditch. The entrance is by two gates, which they close every night at sunset.

Some of the towns, as for instance, that of Bediah, and nearly all those of the interior of Oman, are erected in artificial hollows, which have been excavated to the depth of six or eight feet; and the soil thus removed is left in hillocks round their margins. They owe their fertility to a happy and peculiar mode of conducting water to them. The greater part of the face of the country being destitute of running streams on the surface, a certain class of men

among the Arabs seek in elevated plains for springs or fountains. When one is found, a channel with a very slight descent is bored in the required direction, leaving apertures at regular distances, to give light and air to those who are occasionally sent to keep it clean. Water is frequently conducted by these means for a distance of six or eight miles, and an unlimited supply is thus secured. The channels are usually about four feet broad and two deep, and contain a clear and rapid stream. There are few of the large towns but have four or five streams running into them.

The isolated spots to which water is thus conveyed possess a soil so fertile that nearly every grain, fruit and vegetable common to India, Arabia, or Persia is produced almost spontaneously; a single step conveys the traveller from the glare and sand of the desert into a fertile tract watered by a hundred rills, teeming with the most luxurious vegetation and embowered by lofty and stately trees, whose umbrageous foliage the fiercest rays of a noon-tide sun cannot penetrate. The almond, fig and walnut trees are of enormous size, and the fruit clusters so thickly on the orange and lime trees, that I do not believe a tenth part can be gathered. Above all towers the date-palm, adding its shade to the sombre picture. Some idea may be formed of the density of this shade by the effect it produces in lessening the terrestrial radiation. Fahrenheit's thermometer, which within the house stood at 55° , six

inches from the ground fell to 45° . Such spots present, indeed, a singular and peculiar scene, unequalled, perhaps, in any part of the world.

“Minna,” says the traveller just quoted, “differs from other towns in having its cultivation in the open fields. As we crossed these, with lofty almond, citron and orange trees, yielding a delicious fragrance on either hand, exclamations of astonishment and admiration burst from us. ‘Is this Arabia?’ we said; ‘this the country we have looked on heretofore as a desert?’ Verdant fields of grain and sugar-cane stretching along for miles are before us; streams of water, flowing in all directions, intersect our path; and the happy and contented appearance of the peasants agreeably helps to fill up the smiling picture. The atmosphere was delightfully clear and pure, and, as we trotted joyously along, giving or returning the salutation of peace or welcome, I could almost fancy we had at last reached that ‘Araby the blessed,’ which I have been accustomed to regard as existing only in the fictions of our poets.”

The city of Mecca is erected in a very narrow valley, and from its position a good view of it cannot be obtained. “If I went out at either end,” says Ali Bey, “the mountains allowed me to discern only a few houses; and if I went out at the sides, I found myself upon the side of the mountains, whence I could perceive nothing but an irregular surface of flat roofs, without any perspective.” The

principal streets are regular, and the houses, which are sanded, level, and very convenient, have a pleasing appearance.

The Temple of Mecca is situated nearly in the middle of the city. The only part which lays claim to high antiquity is the Kaaba, called by Mohammedans the house of God. It is a quadrilateral tower, the sides and angles of which are unequal. The size of the edifice, and the black cloth which covers it, give the figure of a perfect square. It is built of square-hewn, but unpolished stones, brought from the neighbouring mountains. Its height is thirty-four feet four inches, and the sides vary from twenty-nine to thirty-eight feet in length. A black stone is "incrusted" in the angle formed by the north-east and south-east side, and is believed to face exactly the east. It is raised forty-two inches above the pavement, and is bordered all round with a large plate of silver, about a foot broad.

To this block has been given the name of "the heavenly stone," from its being believed by all true Moslems to have been presented to Abraham by the angel Gabriel. There is a legend that originally it was a transparent hyacinth, but that, from the sins of the multitudes who kiss it, it has become black and opaque. It is, in fact, a fragment of volcanic basalt, sprinkled throughout with small, pointed, coloured crystals, and varied with red feldspar on a dark, coal-like ground, excepting one of its protuberances, which is a little red-

dish. It is discovered through an opening in the black cloth, which covers the whole of the building except the base.

On the north-west side of the Kaaba there is a sort of parapet, enclosing a semicircular place, paved with very fine marbles. Between this parapet and the body of the Kaaba is a space of about six feet, leaving a passage on either side. Here Moslems suppose that Ishmael was buried. The basement of the building is of marble. Large bronze rings are fixed in it at regular distances all round, to which is fastened, by strings, the lower border of the black cloth that covers the walls. The threshold of the entrance is about six feet above the pavement. There are folding-doors of wood plated over with silver, and fastened with an enormous silver padlock. Except in extraordinary cases, this door is opened only twice a year: it is then entered by a sort of ladder staircase, about eight feet wide, and consisting of ten steps, with rails on each side, mounted on six large rollers.

The interior of the Kaaba consists simply of a room or hall. Its double roof is supported within by three octagonal pillars of aloes-wood; between which, on a bar of iron, hang some silver lamps. The outside is covered with rich black damask, adorned with an embroidered band of gold, which is changed every year, and was formerly sent by the caliphs, afterwards by the Sultans of Egypt, and more recently was provided by the Turkish

emperors. The Kaaba at some distance is almost surrounded by a circular enclosure of pillars, joined towards the bottom by a low balustrade, and towards the top by bars of silver. Just within this inner enclosure, on the south, north, and west sides of the Kaaba, are three buildings, which are the oratories, or places where those of the orthodox sect assemble to perform their devotions.

Another building faces the door of the Kaaba, at the distance of thirty-four feet. The roof is supported by six pilasters, rather more than six feet high. The half of the enclosure nearest the Kaaba is surrounded with a fine railing of bronze, the door of which is always kept fastened with a silver padlock. The railing encloses a sort of sarcophagus, hung with a black cloth magnificently embroidered with gold and silver, and having large golden acorns attached to it. With this is connected another superstitious tale—"that it served Abraham for a footstool to construct the Kaaba, and increased in height as the building advanced." It is, of course, *equally* true with the tale that "the stones came out miraculously, already squared, from the spot where the footstool now stands, and passed into Ishmael's hands, and thence into his father's."

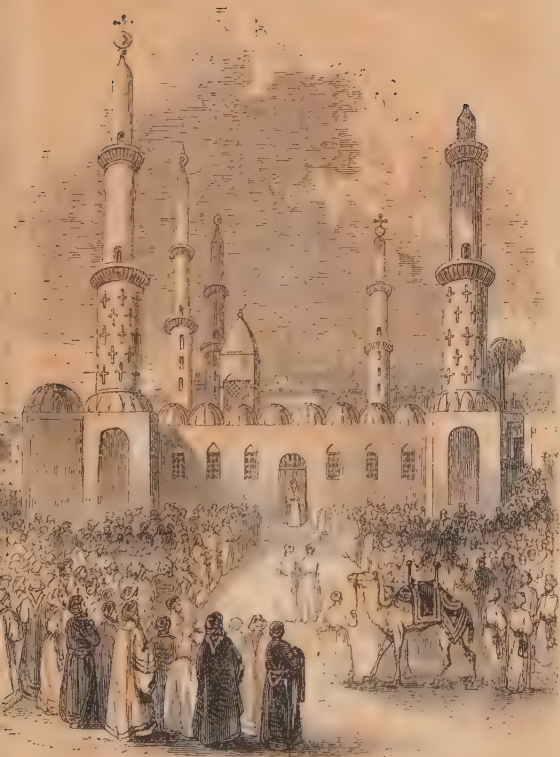
Medina is a small town, but walled round, and has a mosque, which, though remarkable, is not near so large as the temple at Mecca. In one corner of the mosque is built a place about fourteen paces square, about which are

great windows, fenced with brass gates : the inside is decked with lamps and ornaments, and it is arched overhead. In the centre is the tomb of Mohammed, having silk curtains all around it like a bed, which conceal it from view. None enter it but the persons appointed to cleanse it, to light the lamps which burn there by night, and to watch over it. All that the pilgrims can do is to thrust in their hands at the windows, between the brass grates, and to offer petitions, to which Mohammed can give no audience.

There is one city of extraordinary interest, the ruins of which still exist in the Wady Musa, two days' journey from the Dead Sea, and the same distance north-east of Akaba. A modern poet, supposing himself advancing towards it, thus affords us a glimpse of its character :—

“ Still on for Petra, till the desert wide
Shrinks to a valley, and on either side
The rude rock springeth, and a long array
Of tombs forgotten sadden all the way.
Then the earth yawns terrific, and a path
By Nature formed, in waywardness or wrath,
Winds where two rocks precipitously frown—
The giant warders of the wondrous town.
Day comes not here, or in such spectral guise,
She seems an outcast from yon happy skies.
In silent awe, the Arab steals along,
Nor cheer his camels with their wonted song.
Well may the spirit, left alone to brood
On the dim shades which haunt that solitude,
O'erflow with joy, the dreary pathway past,
When Petra bursts upon the gaze at last !”

Should the reader prefer a less poetical, but still vigorous description, it will be found in



Temple of Medina.

the account given by Irby and Mangles:— As they advanced along the ravine, in their approach to Petra, a wild and romantic view opened to them, terminated by the peaks of the black and rugged ridge of Mount Hor, the same that is alluded to in Scripture, and by a boundless extent of desert view, which they had hardly ever seen equalled for singularity and grandeur. The dark ridge of Mount Hor, which appears to be altogether composed of a sort of sparry flint, broken into masses and seamed with wide crevices, with scarcely any verdure to vary its deep purple colour, forms the boundary of this hollow to the southward, and also to the westward, with that high peak, upon which is the reputed tomb of Aaron, rearing itself above all the rest in the middle of the picture. This craggy ridge does not, however, terminate the landscape; the mountain from which they viewed it, being considerably higher, commanding a boundless view beyond it, over a whitish expanse of country, which is varied here and there with other coloured ridges, rising like islands upon it, or jutting forward into it like promontories.

“As we advanced,” say the same travellers, “the natural features of the defile grew more and more imposing at every step, and the excavations and sculpture more frequent on both sides, till it presented, at last, a continued street of tombs, beyond which the rocks, gradually approaching each other, seemed all at once to close without any outlet. There is, however,

one frightful chasm for the passage of the stream, which furnishes, as it did anciently, the only avenue to Petra on this side. It is impossible to conceive any thing more awful or sublime than such an approach: the width is not more than just sufficient for the passage of two horsemen abreast; the sides are in all parts perpendicular, varying from four to seven hundred feet in height;" (Stephens says from five hundred to a thousand;) "they often overhang to such a degree, that, without their absolutely meeting, the sky is intercepted and completely shut out for one hundred yards together, and there is little more light than in a cavern."

Passing the narrow and circuitous defile, which forms for two miles "a sort of subterraneous passage," it opens on the east, the way to the ruins of Petra. The rocks, or rather hills, then diverge on either side, and leave an oblong space where once stood the metropolis of Edom, and where now lies a waste of ruins, encircled, save on the north-east alone, by stupendous cliffs. The minutest embellishments of a magnificent temple entirely cut out of the rock, and now in ruins, are still wonderfully perfect. Along the borders of the cliffs, detached masses of rocks, numerous and lofty, have been wrought into sepulchres, the interior of which is excavated into chambers, while the rock has been cut into the form of towers, with pilasters, and successive bands of frieze and entablature, wings, recesses, figures of animals, and columns.

It is difficult to form a just conception of



Petra.



“the vast necropolis of Petra.” Tombs present themselves, not only in every avenue to the city, and upon every precipice that surrounds it, but even intermixed almost promiscuously with its public and domestic edifices. Many of these consist of a single chamber, ten, fifteen, or twenty feet square, by ten or twelve in height, containing a recess in the wall large enough to receive one or a few deposits. Occasionally oblong pits or graves are sunk in the recesses or in the floor of the principal apartment. Some of these are of considerable depth, but they are mostly choked with stones and rubbish. In these tombs, which are for persons of inferior rank, there is commonly a small door, and an absence of all architectural decorations. Some, of larger dimensions, have several recesses, occupying two or three sides of the apartment, and probably intended for family tombs.

A vast number of excavations, enriched with various architectural ornaments, appear also,—the cemeteries of persons of a higher grade. Decoration is, however, confined to the front of the tombs; the interior is plain and unadorned. When the threshold is passed, perpendicular walls only meet the eye, on which the marks of the chisel may be traced, without a column or even a moulding.

An extraordinary effect is given to some of these monuments by the rich and various colours of the rock of which they are formed; their substance being sandstone, of which red

is the predominant hue. To quote again the language of the poet,

“ Oh, passing beautiful, in this wild spot—
 Temple, and tombs, and dwellings, all forgot—
 One sea of sunlight far around thee spread,
 And skies of sapphire mantling over head :
 They seem no work of man’s creative hand,
 Where labour wrought as wayward fancy planned ;
 But from the rock, as if by magic grown,
 Eternal—silent—beautiful—alone !
 Not virgin white, like that old Doric shrine
 Where once Athena held her rites divine ;
 Nor saintly gray, like many a minster fane,
 That crowns the hill or sanctifies the plain ;
 But rosy-red, as if the blush of dawn
 Which first beheld them were not yet withdrawn ;
 The hue of youth upon a brow of wo,
 Which men called old two thousand years ago !
 Match me such marvel, save in eastern clime—
 A rose-red city, half as old as Time.
 And this is Petra ! ”

Many of the rocks are said, indeed, to be adorned with such a profusion of the most lovely and brilliant colours, as to defy description. In the same mass appear red, purple, yellow, azure, or sky-blue, black, and white, either as distinct, in successive layers, or combined in every variety of shade and hue, yet all soft and brilliant as the tints of flowers, or the plumage of birds, or the sky over which the glories of the sun are cast as he sinks beneath the western hills.

No description can, therefore, do justice to the ruined capital of the Nabathæan Arabs in the land of Edom. Its name, which is traced to the Greek writers, probably gave rise to the kingdom and region being denominated Arabia Petræa. The word in Greek means a rock.

The mention in the Old Testament of a stronghold, which belonged successively to the Amorites, the Edomites, and the Moabites, and bore the name of Selah, which in Hebrew has the same meaning, has given rise to the supposition that the Selah of Edom was the Petra of the Nabathæans.

Diodorus Siculus first mentions it under that name. Strabo thus describes it:—"The metropolis of the Nabathæans is Petra; so called, for it lies in a place otherwise plain and level, but shut in by rocks round about, but within having copious fountains for the supply of water and the irrigation of gardens. Beyond the enclosure the region is mostly a desert, especially towards Judea." Josephus frequently mentions it as the capital of Arabia Petræa.

It appears to have passed away with that kingdom under the sway of the Romans in the time of Trajan. After the sixth century, no notice is taken of Petra, even by the Arabian writers: the probability appears, therefore, to be that it was destroyed in some incursion—which has found no record—of the desert hordes, and that it was afterwards left unpeopled. Burckhardt was the first of our modern travellers who ventured to recognise in these ruins the ancient capital. We are indebted, however, for the most complete account, to Laborde. Dr. Keith has shown the fulfilment of many remarkable predictions, in his work on prophecy, in the article "Idumæa."

CHAPTER IV.

SKETCH OF MOHAMMED—THE KORAN—THE CALIPHS—THE SARACENS—SPLENDOUR OF BAGDAD—LITERATURE AND SCIENCE OF THE ARABS—DISSOLUTION OF THE SARACEN EMPIRE.

THE pure Arabs, (or, as they style themselves, the Arab of the Arabs,) claim to be descended from Kahtan or Joktan, the son of Heber. By their tradition, the daughter of Modab, king of Hejuz, the tenth in descent from Joktan, was the wife of Ishmael, and the Mostarabi, or mixed Arabs, trace their origin to this alliance. The boasted dignity of the children of Abraham, of which the Arabs are as proud as the Jews, makes the lineage of the Mostarabi the favourite among them, particularly as it includes Mohammed, the names of whose ancestors they profess to have preserved in a direct line to Ishmael. The Arabs have made many fanciful additions to the Scripture narrative of Ishmael. They assert that Mecca was the spot on which he was perishing when the angel pointed out the well, which they believe was the sacred Zimyan, and that the Kaaba was built by Abraham to commemorate the preservation of his son, who reigned in Mecca, and transmitted his authority to his descendants. Of these, the genealogy is obscure and contradictory, for twenty-five hundred years, to Adnan, who lived B. C. 122.

From him to Abdallah, the father of Mohammed, A. D., 538, the list of twenty-one generations appears to be unsuspected. The noble tribe of Koreish derive their name from the surname Koreish or the Courageous, given to Fehr, one of the progenitors of Mohammed, who lived A. D. 208. Whatever uncertainty may attach to these genealogies of three thousand years, the evidence of the national descent of the Arabs from Ishmael is too well established to be questioned. The division of the nation into tribes and families, like the Jews, from the earliest period, and their isolated and unsubdued condition, give them a great advantage over other nations in preserving the records of their origin; and when their own story is supported by the testimony of Scripture, and corroborated by their existing circumstances, no room for doubt on this subject is left to the candid inquirer. In the words of Bishop Newton, "We may with more confidence believe the particulars related of Abraham and Ishmael, when we see them verified in their posterity at this day. 'This is having, as it were, ocular demonstration for our faith. This is proving by plain matter of fact that the *Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men*, and that his truth as well as his *mercy endureth for ever.*'"

Of the internal history of Arabia in early times, our knowledge is imperfect. All that has been transmitted to us by its writers, prior to the beginning of the third century of the Chris-

tian era, amounts only to some genealogies of kings, without any fixed chronology, and interspersed with but a few facts, the record of which is unsatisfactory. The Arabs, then, like those of the present day, partly dwelt in cities, and partly as wandering tribes in movable encampments. The former class subsisted by agriculture and by different trades, especially by commerce. To these, therefore, we purpose first to attend, leaving to a subsequent chapter a description of the wandering Arabs.

Mohammed was the descendant of a distinguished family, his own branch of which had fallen into poverty. He could produce many generations of pure and genuine nobility. He sprang from the tribe of Koreish, and the family of Hashem, the most illustrious of the Arabs, the princes of Mecca, and the hereditary guardians of Kaaba. The grandfather of Mohammed was Abdol Motaleb, the son of Hashem, a wealthy and generous citizen, who relieved the distress of famine with the supplies of commerce. Mecca, which had been fed by the liberality of the father, was saved by the courage of his son. The death of the parents of Mohammed in his infancy, followed soon after by that of his grandfather, devolved the charge of him upon his uncle, Abu Talet, by whom he was supported with affectionate liberality, the orphan's own property amounting to no more than five camels and an Ethiopian female slave. His uncle brought him up as a merchant, and in this character he accompa-

nied his kind relative into Syria at the age of thirteen.

In his twenty-fifth year he entered the service of Khadijah, a wealthy widow, whom he afterwards married ; and, by a match so advantageous, rose to a level with the most affluent families in Mecca. It was under these auspicious circumstances that he projected his wretched system, and impiously pretended to inspiration. His wife was his first convert, who communicated the secret of his mission to her cousin Warakah Ebn Nawfal, a professed Christian, tolerably well versed in the Scriptures, who could write in the Hebrew character, and, either from conviction or policy, embraced her opinion. Then followed proselytes of his own family, of whom his youthful pupil and cousin, Ali, was the first, who thus won to himself the distinction of *the first* of believers. The prophet was now in the fortieth year of his age, and still hesitated to become a public preacher of his system. He proceeded in its promulgation in privacy, and with the utmost caution, but afterwards began to frequent the public places of Mecca, and promulgated his doctrines with great eloquence and zeal.

No persuasions of his friends, nor dangers to be encountered, could now induce him to desist. He modified, indeed, his revelations according to circumstances, which introduced some contradictions into his Koran, but never abandoned, or for a moment lost sight of, his object. Opposed by the Koreish, and en-

couraged by new converts, some of them of considerable influence, he proceeded with what he assumed to be his mission, until its twelfth year, when he declared that he had been translated to heaven, and gave of his journey an absurdly fabulous account.

He was soon after compelled to flee from Mecca, his native city, to Yatrib, since called Medina, the first part of a phrase meaning "the town of the prophet," on account of the force and number of his opponents. The day of his flight, the 16th of July, 622, has become the era from which the Mohammedans count their years. Having hitherto acted on the defensive, he adopted the principle, not merely of supporting his system, but of propagating it by the sword. Battles were fought with various success, but upon the whole decidedly favourable to the impostor, who was now transformed into a general and a sovereign. When Mecca was conquered, and the tribes of Arabia joined in the profession, that "there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his apostle," the prophet commenced to spread Islamism over all countries. Strengthened by alliances, and zealous to proselyte by force of arms, many yielded to him: some paid tribute; others embraced the system; kings began to announce their adoption of the creed of a man whom they could not hope to oppose, and thus was Mohammed established. At the height of his power, however, death came; he expired at Medina, on the 8th of June, 632, in the sixty-

third year of his age, a sensual, cruel man, and the greatest of impostors.

It is the common opinion, that Mohammed, assisted by a monk named Sergius, composed the Koran, which means "the reading," or "that which is read;" but his followers assert their belief that it was given him by God, through the ministry of the angel Gabriel. They affirm that it was communicated to Mohammed a verse at a time, and in different places, during the course of twenty-three years. The period thus mentioned is certainly very convenient, as it furnishes Mohammedans with an answer to those who tax them with the glaring contradictions and revolting absurdities of which the Koran is full. Mohammedans even venture to allege, that in the course of so long a time God repealed and altered several doctrines and precepts previously given; thus wickedly ascribing to Jehovah the confusion arising from the ignorance of Mohammed, and his wish to adapt his communications to circumstances constantly changing. The Koran, while Mohammed lived, was only kept in loose sheets; his successor collected them into a volume.

The Koran is the religious code of the Mohammedans. It is divided into one hundred and fourteen larger portions of a very unequal length, which we call chapters, but to which the Arabs apply another word—*sura* in the singular, and *sowar* in the plural. It is rarely used on any other occasion, and properly sig-

nifies a row, or a regular series, as a course of bricks in a building, or a rank of soldiers in an army. It is the same in use and meaning as the *sura* or *tora* of the Jews, who also apply to the fifty-three sections of the Pentateuch a name of the same signification. In the manuscript copies, these chapters are not distinguished by their numerical order, but by particular titles, which are taken sometimes from the peculiar subjects treated of, or the person mentioned therein, but generally from the first word of importance.

Every chapter is divided into smaller portions of very unequal length. Other devices have been adopted for the use of the readers of the Koran in the royal temples, or in the adjoining chapels, where the emperors and great men are interred. Thirty of these persons belong to every chapel; and as each reads a section every day, the whole is read over in the same space of time, as that number by one arrangement comprises the whole book.

The materials of the Koran are wholly borrowed from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, from the Talmudical legends and apocryphal gospels then current in the East, and from the traditions and fables that abounded in Arabia. The crude materials thus collected are here heaped together with perpetual and heedless repetition, without any visible connection or even settled principle. In an incoherent system, the Koran presents to view a religion of depravity, totally repugnant to the character of

God, but therefore more likely to accord with the conceptions and appetites of a corrupt and sensual age.

The same day that Mohammed died, Abu-beker, the father of his favourite wife, chiefly by her influence, was elected Caliph, or "successor," in the regal and pontifical authority. Several revolts and insurrections now occurred, excited by apostates from Islamism and false prophets. These were quelled, and hostile expeditions were resumed. The day that Damascus was taken, Abu-beker died, and by his will appointed Omar his successor.

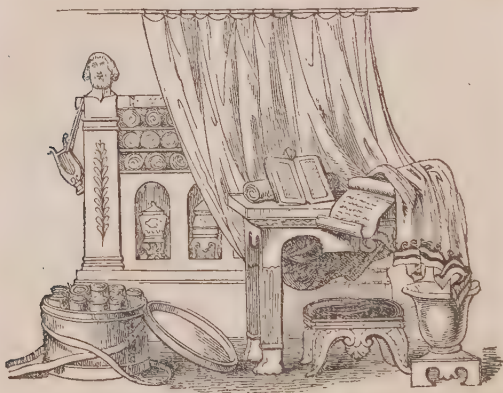
Various battles were now fought, the conquest of Syria and Palestine was completed, and Amru, one of the chiefs of the army, was sent to besiege Alexandria. He took it by assault after a siege of fourteen months and a great loss of men. He sealed up every thing curious and valuable in the city, till the caliph should direct what was to be done. Among the treasures thus possessed was the far-



ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT.

famed library of Alexandria, formed and maintained by the first Ptolemy, king of Egypt, and his successors. It is said to have amounted to 700,000 volumes. It is, however, to be recollected, that the rolls spoken of (and which the annexed engraving represents) contained far less than a printed

volume. The *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, in fifteen books, for instance, in this way would make fifteen volumes; and, according to the same computation, Athenæus says, that Didymus wrote no fewer than 3500 volumes.



MANUSCRIPT ROLLS.

Omar directed that all the valuable goods at Alexandria should be sold to defray the expenses of the war; but added, that if the books found in the library were agreeable to the Koran, they were superfluous; if contrary to it, they were pernicious; and therefore in either case they should all be destroyed! Accordingly Amru distributed the books among the four thousand warm baths of the city, which they supplied with fuel for six months.

Omar was stabbed by a slave in the mosque

at Medina. In the course of a short reign he had erected a most powerful and formidable empire. The number of towns, fortresses, and castles which he took is fearful; and while Alexander the Great dared not meddle with the religion of conquered nations, Omar is said to have destroyed four thousand temples and churches of idolaters, Magians, and Christians. But “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

Othman and Ali succeeded to the power of Omar, the latter being the most illustrious of Mohammed’s companions. He was valiant, generous, and eloquent. The following sayings of his are worthy of notice:—

One of the officers having once insolently asked him, “Why the reigns of Abu-beker and Omar were so tranquil, and the reigns of Othman and Ali were so turbulent?” with great readiness he answered, “Because Abu-beker and Omar were served by Othman and me; and Othman and I by you, and such as you.”

The following decision is creditable to his ingenuity:—Two travellers sat down to dine; the one had five loaves, the other three. A stranger passing by, asked leave to eat with them, and they hospitably agreed thereto. After dinner, the stranger laid down eight pieces of money for his fare, and departed. The owner of the five loaves took up five pieces, and left three for the other, who insisted upon getting half. The case was brought before Ali for his decision, and he gave the fol-

lowing judgment:—"Let the owner of the five loaves take seven pieces of money, and the other but one." And this was the exact proportion of what each furnished for the stranger's entertainment; for, dividing each loaf into three shares, the eight loaves gave twenty-four shares; and as they all fared alike, each person's proportion was a third of the whole, or eight shares. The stranger, therefore, ate seven shares of the five loaves, and only one share of the three loaves; and so the caliph divided the money between the owners.

The real freedom and independence produced by religion were well expressed by him in the following saying:—"Whoever is desirous to be rich without goods, powerful without subjects, and a subject without a master, has only to quit the dominion of sin, and to serve God, and he will find these three things."

The people whose history we are thus briefly tracing are called Saracens, a name derived from the word *Shark*, the East, from whence also we have the term "sirocco," the east wind. The name of Saracens came into use, in a vague and undefined sense, after the Roman conquest of Palestine, but it does not seem to have been employed as a general designation till about the eighth century. It soon acquired a fearful import, for the enthusiasm of the followers of Mohammed kindled all their energies; they poured forth as locusts upon all surrounding countries; nor did they rest till they had overrun one-half of the whole

world. On the east, they invaded and subdued Syria, Persia, northern India even to Oxus, where their characteristics still remain. On the north, they rushed through Asia Minor, crossed the Dardanelles, and laid siege to Constantinople, which was then the capital of the Greek empire. In the west, they subdued Egypt, and all Northern Africa, to the Straits of Gibraltar, crossed there, founded a kingdom in Spain, and planted their banners even on the mountains of Switzerland and the frontiers of France.

They even invaded that kingdom—occupied the provinces of part of Languedoc, Aquitaine, the kingdom of Burgundy as far as Lyons and Besançon, and fought the great battle for the mastery of Europe in the centre of France, between Tours and Poitiers, within two hundred miles of the shores of the English Channel! For six days the contest was doubtful, but on the seventh that resistless “hammer,” as he was called, Charles Martel, and the strength and stature of his northern soldiers, drove the Arabs from a bloody field to their tents, with the loss of their commander Abdallahman. The night brought confusion and discord to the motley tribes of Yemen, Syria, Spain and Africa, and the Saracen host of three hundred and seventy-five thousand men were dissolved and fled. Had the Almighty permitted this event to have been otherwise, there would have been, to all human appearances, no obstacle to the progress of this

scourge over all Europe, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, to the extinction of all hope of freedom, and almost of religion. But "this mighty maze" of events is "not without a plan," and though our dull eyes cannot trace it in the workings of our own days, yet, in looking back upon such a deliverance, we can hardly fail to recognise the hand of Him without whom not even a sparrow falleth to the ground.

After this repulse the Arabs made no further attempts on France, and were finally driven beyond the Pyrennees by Pepin, the son of Charles Martel, in A. D. 759. They afterward conquered Sicily and Cyprus, and besieged Rome itself, but retired after plundering the suburbs. This sudden burst of conquest in a people who had, for three thousand years, been content to maintain their liberty in their native deserts, seems to have arisen from the impulse and concentration given to them by Mohammed. 'This frantic fanaticism, however, was soon expended, and the natural effect of riches and power upon their simple habits was to introduce division in struggling for the possession of luxury, and effeminacy in its enjoyment;—these, and the inadequacy of their patriarchal government for the wants of an empire, unexampled in extent, soon sapped the foundations of their apparent prosperity.

Various possessors of authority and power appeared till the time of Moawiyah II., who, finding himself unequal to the burden they imposed, voluntarily abdicated his office. Feridun,

a Persian prince, had an inscription on one of his pavilions, which has been thus paraphrased :—

“ Man should weigh well the nature of himself,
The varying frailness of this flattering world,
And the true excellence of heaven’s high Lord ;
Then would he this despise, and trust in him.
The world deceives us all ; in God is truth.
Let not thy riches nor thy power prevail
To swell thy bosom with conceits of pride.
Look back, remember those thou hast seen high,
And mark if thou hast ever seen them sink ;
Let this teach thee : one end awaits us all !
And when inevitable Death commands
That we should follow to his dreary realm,
Matters it much, if from a royal couch,
Or from a mattress thrown upon the ground,
We rise to take our journey ? ”

With Feridun, Moawiyah appears to have sympathized. The inscription on his seal was remarkable : “ The world is a cheat.”

At one time the empire was split into two powerful factions, one espousing the house of Ommiah in Syria, the other the house of Ali in Arabia. The Syrian caliph was Abd’almalec, who was more powerful than any of his predecessors, and his son and successor extended his dominions. One of his governors, Hejai, was remarkable for his great cruelty, but circumstances are related of him of a different character.

One day, when he was hunting and alone, grown thirsty with the chase, he civilly asked an Arab, who was feeding his camels in a lonely spot, to give him a little water to drink. The Arab, without returning his salute, said

roughly, "Alight and help yourself, for I am neither your companion nor servant." He did so, and when he had drank, he asked, "Whom do you count the best of all men?"—"The prophet of God," said the Arab. "What think you of Ali?"—"His excellency," said he, "is inexpressible." "What think you of Abd'almalec?" The Arab paused, but being pressed for an answer, intimated that he was a bad prince. "Why so?" said Al Hejai. "Because he has sent us the most wicked governor under the heavens." The Arab then, looking steadfastly at Al Hejai, who was finely dressed, asked, "Who are you?" Not choosing to acknowledge himself, he answered, "Why do you ask?"—"Because," said he, "this bird passing over our heads, by her croaking, tells me you are the chief of the company approaching." His attendants then came up, and by order of the governor took with them the poor Arab. Next day he was brought to Al Hejai's table, who desired him to eat. The Arab then said his usual grace, "God grant that the end of this meal may be as fortunate as the beginning!" After dinner the governor asked, "Do you remember the discourse we held yesterday?" The Arab answered, "God prosper you in every thing! What passed yesterday is a secret not to be divulged to-day." "But I will divulge it," replied Al Hejai. "Take your choice, then, whether you will stay with me as my servant, or be sent to the caliph, with a report of what you have said." He instantly

replied, "There is a third course, better than either of these."—"What is that?"—"Send me home, and never let us see each other any more!" Not a little pleased at the poor man's spirit and readiness, the governor dismissed him with a rich present.

Haroun al Raschid, or "the just," was one of the most celebrated princes of the house of Abbas. It is related, says Mr. Lane, that, at a grand fête which he was giving, he ordered the poet Abu-l-Atáhujeñ to depict in verse the voluptuous enjoyments of his sovereign. The poet began thus:—

"Live long in safe enjoyment of thy desires, under shadow
of lofty palaces!"

"Well said!" exclaimed Al Raschid; "and what next?"

"May thy wishes be abundantly fulfilled, whether at eventide or in the morning!"

"Well again!" said the caliph; "then what next?"

"But when the rattling breath struggles in the dark cavity
of the chest.

Then shalt thou know surely that thou hast been only in
the midst of illusions."

Al Raschid wept; and Fadl, the son of Yatya, said, "The Prince of the Faithful sent for thee to divert him, and thou hast plunged him into grief."—"Suffer him," said the prince, "for he hath beheld us in blindness, and it displeased him to increase it."

His generosity bordered on extravagance.

One day, having received a remittance of thirty thousand pieces of gold from the revenues of one of the provinces, he went on horseback to view the treasure; and observing his courtiers cast longing eyes on the gold, he disposed of no less than twenty-four thousand pieces among his friends before he took his foot out of the stirrup to alight.

One day, a woman claiming redress for damages done by his troops to her house and lands, he told her in the language of the Koran, that, "when princes go to war, the people must suffer from the soldiers."—"Yes," said she; "but the Koran also declares, that 'the habitations of those princes who authorize injustice shall be made desolate.' " He instantly ordered her ample reparation.

Still there were acts of Al Raschid's life in which we discover the greatest injustice. So superstitious was he, too, that he performed one pilgrimage to Mecca on foot, and eight more in pomp. He daily bowed a hundred times at his prayers, and gave a large sum to the poor. How different would have been his course, had he loved and served God, who looks at the heart, and loves mercy more than sacrifice!

The magnificence of the palaces of Bagdad in the times of the caliphs almost exceeds belief, and the accounts we have of it would seem to be greatly exaggerated. According to Mr. Lane, in the beginning of the year of the flight 305, (June, A. D. 917,) two ambassadors

from the Greek Emperor (Constantine ix., Porphyrogenitus) arrived in Bagdad, on a mission to the caliph El Muktedir, bringing an abundance of costly presents. They were first received by the Wezeer, who, at the audience which he granted to them in his garden-palace, displayed on this occasion a degree of magnificence that had never before been manifested by any of his rank. Pages, Memlooks, and soldiers, crowded the avenues and courts of his mansion, the apartments of which were hung with tapestry; and the Wazeer himself was surrounded by generals and other officers on his right and left, and behind his seat, when the two ambassadors approached him, dazzled by the splendour that surrounded them, to beg for an interview with the caliph. El Muktedir, having appointed a day on which he would receive them, ordered that the courts and passages and avenues of his palace should be filled with armed men, and that all the apartments should be furnished with the utmost magnificence. A hundred and sixty thousand armed soldiers were arranged in ranks in the approach to the palace; next to these were the pages of the closets and chief eunuchs, clad in silk, and with belts set with jewels, in number seven thousand—four thousand white and three thousand black; there were also seven hundred chamberlains; and beautifully ornamented boats of various kinds were seen floating upon the Tigris, hard by. The two ambassadors passed first by the palace

of the chief chamberlain, and, astonished at the splendid ornaments and pages at arms which they there beheld, imagined that it was the palace of the caliph ; but what they had seen here was eclipsed by what they beheld in the latter, where they were amazed by the sight of thirty-eight thousand pieces of tapestry of gold embroidered silk brocade, and twenty-two thousand magnificent carpets. Here also were two menageries of beasts, by nature wild, but tamed by art, and eating from the hands of men : among them were a hundred lions, each lion with its keeper. They then entered the palace of the Tree, enclosing a pond, from which rose a tree ; this had eighteen branches, with leaves of various colours, (being artificial,) and with birds of gold and silver (or gilt and silvered) of every variety of kind and size, perched upon its branches, so constructed that each of them sang. Thence they passed into the garden, in which were furniture and utensils not to be enumerated. In the passages leading to it were suspended ten thousand gilt coats of mail. Being at length conducted before El Muktedir, they found him seated on a sofa of ebony, inlaid with gold and silver, to the right of which were hung nine necklaces of jewels, and the like to the left, the jewels of which outshine the light of day. The two ambassadors paused at the distance of about a hundred cubits from the caliph, with the interpreter. Having left the presence, they were conducted through the palace, and were shown splendidly caparisoned

elephants, a giraffe, lynxes, and other beasts. They were then clad with robes of honour, and to each of them was brought fifty thousand dirhams, together with dresses and other presents. It is added, that the ambassadors approached the palace through a street called "the Streets of the Menârehs," in which were a thousand menârehs, or minarets. It was at the hour of noon; and as they passed, the muezzins from all these menârehs chanted the call to prayer at the same time, so that the ambassadors were struck with fear.

During this period of splendour, we may infer that literature flourished among the Arabs, particularly in the early part of the ninth century. Professors of Christianity, but distinguished for their learning, had increased at Bagdad, and now they were encouraged freely to unlock their treasures. The court wore the appearance of a college, rather than of a luxurious and warlike government, and all classes were invited to share the benefits that were accessible. When Al Mamoun was remonstrated with on appointing a learned Christian to an office of influence over the mental efforts of his people, he replied, "I chose this learned man, not to be my guide in religious affairs, but to be my teacher of science; and it is well known that the wisest men are to be found among the Jews and Christians." A striking proof of the value he placed on literature.

The caliphs of the west and of Africa pursued the course of their brethren in the east.

Six thousand professors and pupils studied at one period in the college of Bagdad. At Cairo there were twenty schools, and in the royal library were 100,000 manuscripts. More than seventy libraries were publicly open in the kingdom of Andalusia, and in Cordova there were 280,000 volumes.

The wild and romantic scenery amidst which the ancient Arabs were born and lived, the recollections of early history, as well as every thing in their mode of life, would naturally give them a strong tendency to poetry. On the revival of letters, the art was cultivated with great enthusiasm. Both sexes secured distinction; and even the lives of the poets, as given by Arabian writers, extend to a long series of volumes. Of the epic and dramatic, however, they present no examples.

A whimsical story is told of a king, says Mr. Lane, who denied to poets those rewards to which usage had almost given them a claim. This king, whose name is not recorded, had the faculty of retaining in his memory an ode after having only once heard it, and had a Memlook who could repeat an ode which he had twice heard, and a female slave who could repeat one that she had heard thrice. Whenever a poet came to compliment him with a panegyrical ode, the king used to promise him, that, if he found his verses to be his original composition, he would give him a sum of money equal in weight to what they were written upon. The poet consenting, would recite

the ode ; and the king would say, "It is not new, for I have known it some years ;" and would repeat it as he had heard it ; after which he would add, "And this Memlook also retains it in his memory ;" and would order the Memlook to repeat it, which having heard twice, from the poet and the king, he would do. The king would then say to the poet, "I have also a female slave who can repeat it ;" and ordering her to do so, (stationed behind the curtains,) she would repeat what she had thus heard thrice, so that the poet would go away empty-handed.

The famous poet, El Asmàee, having heard of this proceeding, and guessing the trick, determined upon outwitting the king, and accordingly composed an ode made up of very difficult words. But this was not his only preparative measure ; another will be presently explained : and the third was to assume the dress of a Bedouin, that he might not be known, covering his face, the eyes only excepted, with a lithiam, (a piece of drapery,) in accordance with a custom of the Arabs of the desert. Thus disguised, he went to the palace, and having asked permission, entered, and saluted the king, who said to him, "Whence art thou, O brother of the Arabs? What dost thou desire?" The poet answered, "May God increase the power of the king ! I am a poet of such a tribe, and have composed an ode in praise of our lord the Sultan."—"O brother of the Arabs," said the king, "hast thou heard of our

condition?"—"What is it, O king of the age?" asked the poet.—"It is," replied the king, "that, if the ode be not thine, we give thee no reward; and if it be thine, we give thee the weight in money of what it is written upon."—"How," said El Asmàee, "should I assume to myself that which belongs to another, and knowing, too, that lying before kings is one of the basest of actions? But I agree to this condition." So he repeated his ode. The king, perplexed and unable to remember any of it, made a sign to the Memlook, but he had retained nothing; and called to the female slave, but she also was unable to repeat a word. "O brother of the Arabs," said he, "thou hast spoken truth, and the ode is thine without doubt; I have never heard it before; produce, therefore, what it is written upon, and we will give thee its weight in money, as we have promised."—"Wilt thou," said the poet, "send one of the attendants to carry it?"—"To carry what?" asked the king; "is it not upon a paper here in thy possession?"—"No," replied the poet; "at the same time I composed it I could not procure a piece of paper upon which to write it; I could find nothing but a fragment of a marble column left by my father; so I engraved upon it this; and it lies in the court of the palace." He had brought it wrapped up, on the back of a camel. The king, to fulfil his promise, was obliged to exhaust his treasury; and, to prevent a repetition of this trick, (of which he afterwards disco-

vered El Asmàee to have been the author,) in future, he rewarded poets according to the usual custom of kings.

“The Thousand and One Nights,” usually called the “Arabian Nights Entertainments,” are well known. Doubts have been entertained as to whether they are an original or a translated work, but the preciseness of their descriptions of Arabian life and manners in towns, is generally admitted. “Antar,” so called after its hero, is a work of great celebrity in the east: it exhibits an interesting picture of the condition of Arabia shortly before the appearance of Mohammed, particularly of the wandering tribes. It is traced to a writer named Asmai.

History, though neglected by the ancient Arabs, was cultivated by those of after-times. Annals, chronicles, and memoirs, were greatly multiplied. Some contain much that is fanciful, but others are as remarkable for their accuracy as their extent. A history of Spain is said to have occupied six authors in succession, during one hundred and fifteen years. Almost every subject appears at one period or other to have received the attention of Arabian writers.

We may form some idea of the copiousness of the language of the Arabs from the number of expressions which signify a sword, amounting to above a thousand. A lion may be named by five hundred epithets, a serpent by two hundred, and so simple a substance as honey has

eighty different names, enumerated and explained in their great dictionary, with an apology for the omission of many others.

To the science of the Arabs we have been, and are still, greatly indebted. They are the medium through which we received numerical characters, as well as algebra and trigonometry. They appear to have derived their knowledge of these subjects from the Hindoos; but it was by means of an Arab treatise that algebra was introduced into Europe. A complete and able translation of this work, by Dr. Rosen, was published, with the original Arabic, in 1831.

Their proficiency in astronomy seems to have been great from a very early period. About the year 820, the philosophers of Bagdad measured a degree of a great circle of the earth, first on the plains of Shinar, and a second time on those of Cufa, and determined the circumference of our globe at twenty-four thousand miles. The manner of conducting this remarkable measurement is described by Abulfeda from their best historians. The accuracy of their observations is further proved by their determining the solar period at 365 d., 6 h., 9 m., 12 sec., differing but little from the one we now use.

In the early part of the ninth century, the remote provinces of the west, in Africa and Spain, grew independent of the reigning caliph. Other revolts occurred at subsequent periods. Thus the great and unwieldy empire, so rapidly formed, as rapidly decayed. "Every tree,"

said our Lord, "which my Father has not planted, shall be rooted up." The time arrived, therefore, for the overthrow of the Saracen power. For three hundred years it retained only the shadow of sovereignty, beyond Bagdad and its dependencies, until its final dissolution by the Mogul Tartars.

Now the Tigris is the eastern limit of the race. From the north they have passed back through Asia Minor; and a line stretched from the north-east corner of the Mediterranean to the Tigris bounds their wanderings in that direction. In Spain, there is little left of them except a few traces of their language, and a mixture of their blood. In Africa they still exist, as a numerous and powerful people, and occupy all the north of it, from the extreme east to the extreme west, a greater distance than from the Atlantic to the Pacific shores of our own continent. In Syria, though there is a mixture of races, there is but one language, and that is the Arabic.

To see the Arab as he appears in towns, we must go to Cairo, one of the best built cities of the east. Its streets, however, are narrow and often crooked; and the houses sometimes jut over them on each side, so as almost to meet above. Yet, as they are traversed, every step in them, or around the walls, brings the traveller into contact with ruined buildings, or the confused remains of the ancient city. Its original name in Arabic was El Kâhirah; but it is now universally called Musr, as were the

former capitals of Egypt. The population is estimated at about two hundred and fifty thousand souls.

Moslems of Arabian origin have for many centuries mainly composed the population of Egypt. They have changed its language, laws, and general manners, and made the metropolis the principal seat of Arabian learning and arts. Musr must therefore be regarded as the first Arab city of our age, and in no other place can so complete a knowledge be obtained of the most civilized classes of the Arabs. It appears that Moslem Egyptians compose nearly four-fifths of the population of the metropolis, and seven-eighths of that of all Egypt.

These people have descended from various tribes of families which have settled in Egypt at different periods ; but, by intermarriage with Copts and others who have become proselytes to the Mohammedan faith, as well as by a change of life, from a state of wandering to that of citizens or agriculturists, they have, as Mr. Lane shows, become so much altered, that there is a strongly marked difference between them and the natives of Arabia. Yet they must be regarded as not less genuine Arabs than the dwellers in the desert.

In general, they attain the height of about five feet eight or nine inches. Most of them are remarkably well-proportioned. Those who have not been much exposed to the sun have a yellowish, but very clear complexion, and soft skin ; the rest are of a considerably darker



Arabs of the Plains of Jordan.

and coarser complexion. A remarkable characteristic of the Egyptian women is their upright carriage and gait. It is most observable in the peasantry, owing doubtless, in a great measure, to the habit of the women of bearing heavy earthen water-vessels and other burdens upon the head.

Their devotion to their prophet is great, and they are generally much more affected in visiting his tomb, than in performing any other rite. In ordinary conversation they frequently allude to him, and implore his intercession. Some will not do any thing that the prophet is not recorded to have done; and they particularly abstain from any thing he did not eat, though its lawfulness is undoubted. One person in authority forbade a woman, who questioned him as to the propriety of the act, to spin by the light of torches passing in the street by night, which were not her own property, because the prophet had not mentioned that it was lawful to do so, and was not known to have availed himself of a person's light without his leave.

They pay high honour to the Koran, generally taking care never to hold it, or suspend it in such a manner that it shall fall too low. They deposit it on a high and clean place, and never put any thing, not even a book, on the top of it. On quoting from it, they usually say, "He whose name be exalted," or "God, whose name be exalted, hath said, in the excellent Book,"—a course which may well ex-

cite the shame of professing Christians, for their disregard of the only volume given them by inspiration of God.

Motives of policy or courtesy may lead to the expression of liberal sentiments, but commonly there is a great display of pride. The Moslems consider persons of any other faith as children of perdition, and in doing so follow the saying of the Koran: "O ye who have become believers, take not the Jews or Christians for your friends: they are friends one to another; but whosoever of you taketh them for his friends, he surely is one of them."

Like some other people of the east, they are very hospitable. A word which signifies "a person on a journey" is most commonly employed in the sense of a visitor or guest. Very few persons would think of sitting down to a meal, were there a stranger in the house, without inviting him to partake of it: should he be a menial, he would be invited to eat with the servants. Persons of the middle classes, if living in a retired situation, sometimes take their supper before the door of the house, and invite any passenger of respectable appearance to share it with them.

Mr. Lane describes the temperance and moderation of the people, with regard to diet, as exemplary. They show a great respect for bread; the name they give it literally signifies life, and they guard against wasting the smallest portion.

The highest and middle orders are scrupu-

lously cleanly, and those of the lower rank are more so than in most other countries. Ablutions are enjoined upon them by their religious system. Conducive as they are to health in a hot climate, it would be well did they attend to the cleanliness of their offspring, but their children are usually left in a dirty state.

Indolence is generally prevalent ; and labour is encountered only when imperatively necessary. This is partly to be traced to the heat of the climate and the fertility of the soil. The boatmen, porters, and other labourers often endure extreme fatigue ; but mechanics, though greedy of gain, consume far more time in their work than it requires, and may be easily induced to leave it, however lucrative, for unprofitable trifles.

Depravity abounds among the Moslems in all its fearful forms ; and as we glance at them, while shocked at the variety and extent of evil, we long to waft to them the glad tidings of salvation. .

“ The cross, once seen, is death to every vice ;
Else He that hung there suffered all his pain,
Bled, groaned, and agonized, and died in vain.”

CHAPTER V.

PROPHECY IN REFERENCE TO ISHMAEL—ITS MEMORABLE FULFILMENT—OBJECTIONS OF GIBBON—THEIR REFUTATION.

IN looking now at the dwellers in the desert, we are reminded of an affecting narrative in the inspired volume. Hagar, the Egyptian maid of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, was driven by the conduct of her mistress into the wilderness. But the angel of the Lord appeared to the fugitive, and said, "Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand will be against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, 'Thou God seest me; for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me.'"*

A few additional circumstances are supplied to this prediction by another passage: "And Abraham said unto God, Oh that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my

* Gen. xvi. 11—13.

covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.”*

Of Ishmael it was also stated, “He will be a wild man.” The word employed is very emphatic; it is that used to describe the wild ass, to which a reference has already been made.

Ishmael was a stranger to his father’s house. Early was he inured to hardships. As his body grew robust, his mind doubtless became energetic and even fierce from these circumstances. And as the wild ass is remarkable for its savage disposition and prodigious swiftness, and its dwelling in the wilderness, so are the descendants of Ishmael. Their father was an archer, and, like him, in the use of bows and arrows they have always been dexterous and successful.

Another declaration in reference to Ishmael is equally remarkable: “I will make of him a great nation:” and consequently, there was a rapid increase of his immediate descendants. Isaac, though the child of promise, with whom was continued the covenant of redemption, and in whom centred the designs of the God of love

* Gen. xvii. 18—21.

towards our fallen and guilty race, had only two sons, Jacob and Esau. Of these the last was rejected, and the line of the Messiah,—the anointed of the Lord,—the Almighty and gracious Saviour of man, was confined to the younger branch of that family. One hundred and sixty-nine years after the period in which the prediction was delivered, Jacob had only twelve sons, while the children of Ishmael were so greatly augmented in number as to become a trading nation. We have evidence of this when the eleven patriarchs were plotting the destruction of their brother Joseph, for then it is said, “Behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.”*

It was declared, moreover, that Ishmael should “beget twelve princes.” And when Moses enumerates the individual descendants of the patriarch by name, he thus concludes his account: “These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.”†

Nebaioth is called by the Arabs the first-born son of Ishmael, and the prince or sheikh of one of the twelve Ishmaelitish tribes, which, as well as the territory they occupied, continued to bear his name in after times. Mahalath, one of Esau’s wives, is expressly called the sister of

* Gen. xxxvii. 25.

† Gen. xxv. 16.

Nebaioth, and the land of Esau or Edom was ultimately possessed by the descendants of Nebaioth. They appear to have lived for ages as shepherds.

On the conquest of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar, the Edomites made themselves masters of a great part of the south of Palestine, while, either then or at a later period, they themselves were supplanted in the southern part of their own territory by a people called, both by the Greek and Roman writers, by a name which is clearly traceable to the Nebaioth of the Hebrews. Not that they consisted only of his descendants, to the exclusion of other Ishmaelites: the Arabs are frequently described in Scripture as "a mingled people;" and it cannot be doubted that the Nabathæans included a variety of Arab races, who took their common name from the progenitor of the largest or most influential tribe, Nebaioth, the first-born of Ishmael.

While the greater number of the Nabathæans followed the occupation of shepherds, others applied themselves to commerce. In the history of ancient commerce, Arabia appears of importance, not only on account of the export of its own productions, but also as an intermediate station in the trade with India. Herodotus calls Arabia the only country where frankincense, myrrh, cassia and laudanum are to be found. Gold and precious stones are also often alluded to by the ancients as indigenous productions of Arabia Felix. And though

the real productions of the country may be sometimes confounded with articles that were foreign, the early trade of the Phœnicians with India must have been carried on to a great extent through Arabia. The attentive reader of the Scriptures will not fail to remember that one of the earliest and most important allusions to this mercantile intercourse of the Phœnicians with several towns, or countries, or tribes of Arabia, occurs in the striking elegy of the prophet Ezekiel on the fall of Tyre.

It was said of Ishmael, "his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him;" and we feel that when the first clause of the sentence is true, the last is inevitable. Society is held together by mutual obligations; and the enmity of one class produces and sustains it in others to which it is opposed. The Arabs have long retained the character of an independent people. They have successfully resisted in every age the armies that invaded them, nor have their necks ever been galled by any yoke of submission. When the ancient historian, Diodorus Siculus, describes the glory of Sesostris, the most renowned of the sovereigns of Egypt, and the extent of his conquests, he is compelled to acknowledge that the Arabs were formidable to him. So far from crouching before his armies, which in other quarters had been deemed resistless, they presented a front which seemed to scowl defiance on his power. Though in the pride of dominion he had yoked kings to his

chariot, as so many beasts of burden, whenever he entered the city or the temple, he was compelled to build a wall along the coast of Egypt from Heliopolis to Pelusium, to guard himself against the Arabs and the Syrians—his impetuous neighbours. The Assyrians, the Persians, and the Medes were generally on friendly terms with the Arabs; but they frequently obtained by courtesy that which they could not have hoped to gain by violence from a people they found to be invincible. When Cambyses turned his arms against Egypt, he was first compelled to ask permission of the Arabs to pass through their dominions, and on them, as a free and independent people, even Cyrus could not impose conditions.

There was, however, one conqueror on whose purposes it becomes us more fully to dwell. The ambition of Alexander was proverbially great, and it is said that when he had subdued the whole known world, he wept that he had not other worlds to conquer. Nations were crushed under him, others sent embassies of submission to his authority, and the barbarous and the civilized alike desired the shadow of his protection. But the descendants of Ishmael were a solitary exception to the general subserviency. In the independence and haughtiness of their spirit, they gazed on his dominion with undisturbed self-confidence, alike disdaining to court his favour or conciliate his affection: they even dared to reject his friendship and despise his menaces.

Alexander was mortified at their proud defiance, and determined to chastise their presumption. He raised an immense force by land and sea, and thought only of signal and certain vengeance. But the word of God had gone forth,—that word which shall not fail in one jot or one tittle, though the heavens and the earth pass away. The prophecy as to the descendants of Ishmael was to be fulfilled, though all the powers of the world were arrayed against them. And so it was; Alexander was cut off in the flower of his age, before he could consummate his purposes; the Arabs were delivered from all the toils he was attempting to throw around them; and the truth of Jehovah appeared, like himself, immutable and eternal.

Nothing was now attempted against their liberties, until they were threatened by Antigonus. He advanced with all the pomp and pageantry of war; but, so far from enjoying a triumph, the Arabs chased his soldiers from their territories, and would not allow them to gather bitumen in the Lake Asphaltites.

When the sceptre of the world passed into the hands of imperial Rome, they did not bend to its sway. At different periods, several illustrious generals aimed to make a tract of country, hitherto so stubborn and unyielding, a Roman province, but it was only to reap inevitable failure. A few tribes, indeed, were subdued by Pompey in the time of the Republic, and by Ælius Gallus in the reign of Augustus, but the impression they made on the country was

inconsiderable. Their conquest was incomplete, their assault was not general, neither was the tract occupied by them considerable, nor their influence permanent. Trajan and Severus attacked the Arabs; but though the former was more successful than the latter, it has been shown, after the most careful and enlarged researches, that he never was master of Arabia Petræa, much less of Arabia Felix, “notwithstanding the mean adulation of his coins, orators, and historians.”

One opponent of the facts now adduced must not be overlooked. The historian of “The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire” has had his full meed of praise. But whatever may be the credit due to Gibbon for his diligent research, or for the charms of his style, his infidelity is beyond dispute. It sometimes appears clearly on the surface of his pages, and when it does not, we may often detect “the trail of the serpent.” It can excite no surprise than that he should thus write:—“The perpetual independence of the Arabs has been the theme of praise among strangers and natives: and the arts of controversy transform this singular event into a prophecy and a miracle in favour of the posterity of Ishmael. Some exceptions that can neither be dissembled nor eluded, render this mode of reasoning as indiscreet as it is superfluous: the kingdom of Yemen has been successively subdued by the Abyssinians, the Persians, the Sultans of Egypt, and the Turks: the holy cities of Mecca and Medina

have repeatedly bowed under a Scythian tyrant ; and the Roman province of Arabia embraced the peculiar wilderness in which Ishmael and his sons must have pitched their tents in the face of their brethren."

But a reply has already been anticipated in what has been advanced. We have adduced the testimony of the best writers of history, and we oppose the declarations of men who had no bias in favour of the word of God to those of one who wrote—infatuated man—with the strongest bias against it ; and we claim the credit of a refutation most decisive and complete.

There is, however, one addition which we cannot refrain from making ; it shows at once the immutability of truth, and the inconsistency of error. It is from the pen of Gibbon himself ; it is from the very page just quoted, and without the intervention of a single sentence. Let the reader mark and weigh well the refutation of his infidel statements under his own hand. He has asserted, be it observed, that there have been some exceptions to the independence of the Arabs, and consequently that the prophecy and the miracle in favour of the descendants of Ishmael are to be traced to the " arts of controversy ;" but he adds, " Yet these exceptions are *temporary or local* ; the body of the nation has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies ; the arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never achieve the conquest of Arabia ; the

present sovereign of the Turks may exercise a shadow of jurisdiction, but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people, whom it is dangerous to provoke, and fruitless to attack." In a note, Gibbon further acknowledges that "the real possessions, and some naval inroads of Trajan are *magnified* by history and medals into the Roman conquest of Arabia."

Any addition to these admissions is unnecessary; the prophecy in reference to Ishmael has been fulfilled. The surrounding countries of Egypt, Syria, and Persia have once and again changed their rulers and their race, but Arabia has ever continued the same. The march of conquest has continued around her, but it has never penetrated her wild fastnesses. Well has it been remarked, "she has retained her identity,—an oasis of freedom amidst a desert of slaves."

It has been said, with great truth and beauty, in Collyer's work on Prophecy, "In entering the temple of Revelation, one of the first objects which has attracted the attention of all ages, and which constitutes a grand support, is the pillar of prophecy. Like the celebrated obelisks of Egypt, it is covered with hieroglyphics, which the wisdom of man, and the skill of science, in their combined efforts, long attempted in vain to decipher. There is one interpreter whose elucidations never fail to render the inscription intelligible. It is Time.

His hand retraces all the figures before the eyes of succeeding generations ; his interpretation is recorded by the pen of faithful and impartial history ; and by comparing the commentary with the original, we are able to comprehend both the one and the other. This pillar is adamant, and resists the impressions of age. Its inscriptions were written by hands which have long since mouldered into dust, and by persons who did not themselves always understand what they wrote, nor were able to explain the characters which they formed ; but the substance of them was dictated by God himself, and the column is his own workmanship. There have been many fruitless efforts made to shake this monument of infinite wisdom, and to erase these lines of unsearchable knowledge ; but the pillar remains unmoved, the lines unimpaired, and the whole uninjured either by malice or by years. The parts of this singular elevation which stand nearer the roof of the temple are covered by an impenetrable cloud. The whole pillar was once equally involved ; but Time, who has rolled away the mist from its base, shall at the destined period unveil the remaining part of it ; and while we shall be able to read the writing, he shall announce, with unerring perspicuity, the interpretation.”

The mist has most certainly been chased from the part of the column bearing upon it the prophecy in reference to Ishmael. The

Bedouins pride themselves in being as free as the wind in all their movements over the desert. They roam about like the shifting sands, scorning to submit to the government of the neighbouring nations. Small tribes or fragments of tribes may be an exception to this remark, but it holds good of the mass. Their black tents may be seen scattered here and there over the hills of Mount Lebanon, and tenanted by those who bear the name of some of the great tribes of the desert, from whom they have been separated by domestic feuds. But even these broken hordes, though living thus, will not brook oppression. They detest the Turk and hate the Russian; and on the least attempt to curb them, they fly to the desert, and luxuriate in poverty and freedom.

The traveller is struck to this day with the unalterable character of Ishmaelitish manners. It is, for instance, nearly sunset, and he is in the midst of an Arab encampment. Sheep, asses, and cattle approach it from afar, under the guardianship of young boys, and the maidens go forth to milk. Meanwhile the more aged females prepare the evening meal, consisting of heaps of rice, having butter thinly poured upon them, piled upon circular wooden dishes; while the young and old men are prostrate on the floor, pouring forth their prayers, with their unsheathed swords lying before them. With the murmur of their petitions, the bellowing of camels, the braying of asses, the bleat-

ing of sheep and goats, and the deep bark of the shepherd dog are mingled.

The traveller now approaches; a female goes forth to him; he asks for water, and what is the reply? "O stranger! our encampment affords no water, but milk we freely offer to you." She immediately returns to the tent, and though it may deprive her own family of the evening meal, she again appears, and gracefully presents the bowl to the traveller. He drinks, and with the usual and appropriate phrase, "May safety be with you!" he returns the vessel and resumes his journey. How little aid from fancy is required in such circumstances to transport the mind to the days of the patriarchs, when Ishmael roamed over the same spot, or when the tents of Judah were spread about these plains, and Moses tended the flocks of Jethro!

Could we listen to their language, examine their garments, partake of their food, enter their tents, attend the ceremonies of their marriage feasts, and present ourselves before the chief, we should find that still all is the same. The aged men sit in dignity; at the wells, the people water their flocks; they are found at the door of the tent in the cool of the day; they place the calf which they have dressed before the stranger; they move onward to some distant place, and pitch their tent near richer pasturage; and all the treasures they possess are in camels, kine, sheep, and goats, men-ser-



Scene in the desert.

vants and women-servants, and changes of raiment. "As we look on," says a traveller, "we are almost ready to ask if such an one be not Abraham, or Lot, or Jacob, or Job, or Bildad the Shuhite, or Rebekah, or Rachel, or the daughter of Jethro the Midianite; we seem to know them all. The mountains, and valleys, and streams partake of the same unchangeableness; not a stone has been removed, not a barrier has been raised, not a tree has been planted, not a village has been called together. Could Ishmael come again to the earth, he would recognise without effort his own people and his own land.



CHAPTER VI.

PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE BEDOUINS—THEIR MANNERS
AND CUSTOMS—THEIR DEFICIENCY IN MECHANICAL ARTS—
THEIR LOVE OF MUSIC—THEIR PLUNDER.

THE Arabs are of the middle size, lean, and athletic. Their eyes and hair are dark, and their complexion is brown. In youth the countenance is generally mild but expressive; in advanced age, the aspect is truly venerable.

The Aenezes are not so tall as those of some other tribes; only a few of them are above five feet two or three inches in height. Their persons, however, are extremely well formed; they are not so slight as some travellers have represented them, and their features are good. Their deep-set eyes sparkle from under their bushy eye-brows with extraordinary vivacity.

Living as the Arabs do, in the open air, their senses are remarkably acute. They can descry distant objects in their vast plains, which could not be discovered by less practised eyes. Sounds are also caught with surprising facility and certainty. Captain Newland mentions an instance of a ship, which, after firing the morning gun, ran ninety-six miles by the log;



A Sheik.

and when the pilot came on board in the evening, he declared he had heard the signal at sun-rise, on the faith of which he had put off with his boat. Nor is this a solitary fact; others equally surprising may be told of Arabs who act as pilots in the Red Sea. The sense of smell is also extremely nice, and hence their dislike to houses and towns.

Another singular power of the Arab is that of telling by the foot-prints on the sand whether they were made by one of his own, or of a neighbouring tribe. He also knows whether the person passed on that day or several days before, and whether he carried a load or not, by the faintness or depth of the impression. Should he be in pursuit, and find the track of the person sought, he judges by the intervals between the steps whether he is fatigued or not, and consequently of the likelihood of overtaking him. He is equally sagacious as to the feet of camels, and his tact is extremely useful in recovering those that have been stolen or have strayed, as well as in the pursuit of fugitives.

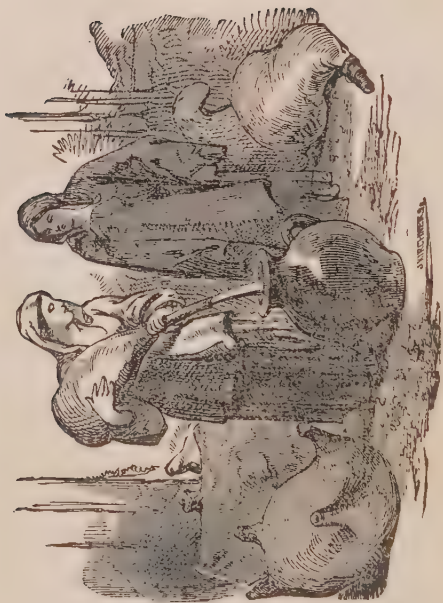
Two Lascars who had deserted from an English ship at Suez, were brought back by the Arabs, who traced them on a road much travelled and well beaten.

A camel can be tracked by a Bedouin shepherd even in a sandy valley, where thousands of other footsteps cross the road in all directions; and sometimes he can tell the name of

every one that has passed in the course of a morning. Many transactions, which would otherwise be secret, are brought to light by the singular power which the Arabs have. An offender can scarcely hope to escape detection.

The title of Sheik is the most ancient and common in use among the grandees of Arabia, but the Sheriffs, being the descendants of Mohammed, hold the first rank, a dignity which shows the singular veneration in which the family of the impostor is held. The Sheriffs are multiplied over all Mohammedan countries; and though they are frequently found in the lowest state of misery, their character is held sacred, and their presence commands universal respect. The dignity thus possessed is hereditary both by male and female descent.

Arabia is, and has been from the earliest ages, ruled by a number of princes and petty lords, independent of each other, and exercising, within their own territory, a sort of supreme independent power, founded on patriarchal principles. The sway of the father of a family; the first source of subordination among men, is that of which the influence is most strongly felt among the Arabs. Each little community is considered as a family, the head of which exercises paternal authority over the rest. These, in the course of succession or migration, are split into several branches, that still form one tribe, without being dependent on



ARAB BOTTLES.

each other; but their genealogies are carefully counted, and the representative of the senior branch is always regarded with a high degree of respect and deference. The republican form, which originated in the bosom of cities, has never been known or even attempted in Arabia; but a certain kind of confederation is made by the election of a great sheik, or "sheik of sheiks," who holds supremacy. This dignity belongs to a certain family, but out of this family the selection is made by the inferior sheiks, from general favour, or an idea of merit. This sway, however, can never be said to assume a feudal aspect, or enable him to summon the other chiefs as vassals. Each, intrenched in his rocky castle, or roaming with his camels and flocks over the expanses of the desert, holds himself independent of every other human power.

The tent is the cherished home of the larger proportion of the people, and when they remove, their dwellings are transported with them. Their height is generally seven feet, the length from twenty-five to thirty, and the breadth about ten. A tent is divided into two apartments, one for the men and the other for the women, by a white woollen carpet of Damascus manufacture, which is drawn across, and fastened to the three middle posts.

The furniture comprises pack-saddles, as well as others for riding, water-bags made of tanned camel-skins, goat-skins for milk and

butter, a little bag into which may be put the hair or wool which falls from the sheep and camels on the road, a leathern bucket for drawing up water from deep wells, a hand-mill, a mortar, a coffee-pot, a copper pan, wooden dishes, the horses' feeding-bag, and the iron chain to fasten their fore-feet while pasturing about the camp.

A camp varies according to circumstances. If the tents are many, they extend in a straight line, in rows three or four deep; if few, they are pitched in a circle. The dwelling of the sheik is always on the side where travellers are expected, whom he has to receive, or where danger is apprehended, which it is his duty to oppose. He strikes his lance into the ground in front of his tent, and ties to it his horse or camel, while the couch on which he and his guests recline is formed of pack-saddles. Wandering in search of water, the Arabs move in parties slowly over the sandy plain. Those who are armed ride foremost to reconnoitre; the flocks, with their young, follow; and behind come the beasts of burden, laden with the women and children, the tents, baggage, and provision.

The provisions of the Bedouins for a journey of ten or twelve days, are, "a bag of small cakes, made from flour, mixed with camel's or goat's milk, and a skin of water. Two of the former, each weighing about five ounces, with a draught of water, the latter twice during the



Arab Feast.

twenty-four hours, form their sole subsistence on such occasions; yet, patiently as they endure this meagre fare, whenever an opportunity offers, they do not scruple to run into the opposite extreme of voracious indulgence."

The common dress of the Bedouins is very simple, consisting of a coarse cotton shirt, over which is worn a thin, light, white woollen mantle, or sometimes one of a coarser kind, striped with white and brown. The wealthy wear, instead of this, a long gown of silk or cotton stuff. The mantles worn by the sheiks are interwoven with gold, and may be valued at fifty dollars. The head-dress varies greatly, and is often expensive. Sometimes several caps are worn. These are made of linen, cotton, or thick cloth. They are used when an Arab wishes to be very gay; and then the one that covers the whole is richly embroidered with gold, and inwrought with texts and passages from the Koran. Over all these is wrapped a sash or large piece of muslin, with the ends ornamented with silk or gold fringes hanging down. This encumbrance is considered a mark of respect towards superiors. Niebuhr has shown forty-eight different ways of wearing the head-dress. The Bedouins use a square kerchief of yellow or green cotton, with two corners hanging down on each side, to protect them from the sun and wind, or to conceal their features when they wish to be unknown. In winter, the Bedouins throw

over the shirt a pelisse made of sheep-skins stitched together. As, too, thick clothing is found a defence from heat as well as cold, such a covering is sometimes worn in summer.

The importance attached by a chief, though almost without clothing, to his position, will appear from the statement of a modern traveller. “‘You wished,’ said the sheik, ‘to see the country of the Bedouins: *this*,’ he continued, striking his spear firmly into the sand, ‘*this* is the country of the Bedouins.’ Neither he nor his companions wore more than a single cloth around their waist, all the rest of the body being left bare. Their hair, which is permitted to flow unconfined as low as their waist, and is usually kept loaded with grease, protects them, in a measure, from the intensity of the sun’s rays; but they adopt no other covering.”

In another case, the dress of the sheik and his people, who were of a better sort, consisted of the *aba*, or cloak, procured from Syria or Egypt, and striped vertically black and white, and a loose sort of unbleached cloth extending as low as the knees, and bound round the waist with a leathern girdle, in which was thrust a long crooked knife, or *jambir*, their ammunition, and the apparatus for striking a light, which a Bedouin is never without. The sheik and a few of his followers only wore the striped red and yellow kerchief, in such general use in

other parts of Arabia ; and all the tribe, therefore, permitted their hair to grow, which is generally plaited, and reaches as low as the waist.

The dress of the women consists of a wide cotton gown of a dark colour, blue, brown, or black, and a kerchief for their head. They go barefooted at all seasons, and are very fond of personal ornaments. Silver rings are much worn in their ears and noses. All puncture their lips, and dye them blue. Some tattoo their cheeks and other parts of their bodies. They paint their eyelids and eyelashes black, with a preparation of lead ore. The Arabs seldom allow their women to be seen. When a stranger is introduced, the cry of "Tarik !" which means "Retire !" warns them at once to disappear. It is reckoned a breach of decorum to look a woman steadfastly in the face.

The usual articles of food are rice, pulse, dates, milk, butter and flour. The common people eat a coarse and insipid bread. The grain is ground in mills with the hand, or merely bruised between two stones. The dough is rolled into balls and cooked among embers when there is no gridiron, and the bread is usually eaten when only partially baked and hot. Butter is used in every dish ; all their food swims in it. In some districts, there is an abundance of vegetables and poultry. Animal food is but little used, from its being considered unwholesome in hot countries. The

flesh of the camel is more esteemed in winter than in summer, but it is rarely eaten. Locusts are sold in the markets of Yembo and also at Jiddah. The Mulkin or red species, being the fattest, is preserved, and when fried and sprinkled with salt, they are considered wholesome and nutritious food. In 1834 this part of the sea-coast of Arabia was visited by an incredible number of these insects, which did much damage to the date-palms. Swarms were drowned in their passage from the Egyptian coast, and the beach was strewn with their carcasses to the depth of several feet. How insects, apparently so ill qualified for flight, are enabled thus to cross the Red Sea, affords matter for curious inquiry; but that they do so is evident, for we occasionally saw passing swarms in the centre.

All orientals are early risers: the Arabs go to bed about ten, and their first sleep is over shortly after midnight. The poor classes repose upon mats on the ground: those in better condition, on rude bedsteads, with four legs, having the frame crossed by ropes. "Although," says a traveller, "I have known a Bedouin, on a desert journey, travel three days and as many nights, without any slumber, except that obtained on his camel, yet within a town or encampment they will sleep during the greater part of the day, without finding it any interruption to their usual repose at night; and they often expressed surprise that I did not thus

indulge." As soon as it is light, an Arab commences his religious exercise, by saying "La illa illella, Mahomuda rusoul Allah ;" he then awakens those around him, (for in the desert, as on board ship, they usually sleep in groups,) and invites them to join in his prayers, which he most commonly begins with a verse from the Koran, intimating that prayer should be preferred to sleep.

Rude in manners, and fierce in general character, the Arabs are not without courtesy. Not that, in the desert, there is the studied and forced politeness of towns. "Welcome! a thousand times welcome! You are the guest of the holy city. My whole property is at your disposal!" is the language of the obsequious shopkeeper of Mecca to his foreign customer; but this the Bedouin would consider ridiculous. His usual salutation is "Peace be with you!" and, on his departure, he pronounces a simple farewell.

There are instances of a want of courtesy among the Arabs not less striking. The following will serve for an example. "Whilst halting here for a few minutes," says a traveller, "one of our guides discovered that his camels had been galled by the ropes which secured its saddle. Without asking any permission, he walked up to the spot where I was seated, and coolly thrust his dirty fingers into the fat of some salt meat then before me, which he tore off and proceeded to anoint the wounded

beast. On returning for a further supply, he appeared surprised that I objected to this unceremonious method of helping himself. The habits of these Bedouins are, in other respects, any thing but cleanly.

Thoroughly inured to fatigue, the Arabs can endure a great degree of hunger and thirst. Sometimes they travel for days without tasting water, and to abstemious habits we may trace their hardy and athletic frames. They are, indeed, models of sobriety, and never indulge in luxuries, except on the arrival of a stranger, or some festive occasion.

Among the Bedouins domestic industry is but little known. As it is among most other Asiatic people, the Arab enjoys his amusements, and devolves on the weaker sex all the household cares. Sometimes there is a curious inversion of character: the men milk the cattle and ply the distaff, while the women work the loom. The Arabs are deficient in the mechanical arts. They know little more than the tanning of leather, and the weaving of coarse fabrics. They have a few blacksmiths and saddlers; and the work of artisans is considered degrading. They are, consequently, dependant on foreign supplies. Jidda, the wealthiest town of the same extent in the Turkish dominions, and, consequently, bearing a name that means "rich," is the chief emporium of the Arabian trade. Indian goods are sent from hence to Suez and Cairo, whence they are dis-

persed over Egypt and the Mediterranean ports.

No potentate of any part of the world is more careful to avoid intermarriage with a plebeian than the Bedouin. Nor would estrangement from the circumstances of Arab life be conducive to happiness. Maisuna was the Bedouin bride of Moawiyah; but amidst all the pomp of Damascus, she sighed for the desert, and found her greatest comfort in singing the melancholy strain in private, which is thus given in Carlyle's "Specimens of Arabian Poetry:"—

The russet suit of camel's hair,
With spirits light and eye serene,
Is dearer to my bosom far,
Than all the trappings of a queen.

The humble tent and murmuring breeze
That whistles through its fluttering walls
My unaspiring fancy please,
Better than towers and splendid halls.

The attendant colts, that bounding fly,
And frolic by the litter's side,
Are dearer in Maisuna's eye,
Than gorgeous mules in all their pride.

The watch-dog's voice, that bays whene'er
A stranger seeks his master's cot,
Sounds sweeter in Maisuna's ear,
Than yonder trumpet's loud-drawn note.

The rustic youth, unspoil'd by art,
Son of my kindred, poor but free,
Will ever to Maisuna's heart
Be dearer, pamper'd fool, than thee!

These pensive and reproachful strains were heard by Moawiyah, and he sent Maisuna back

to Yemen. The Bedouin still retains that passionate love of song, for which his race has ever been distinguished. Whether tending his flock, beguiling the tediousness of a journey, or seated after his evening meal at the fire, the Arab constantly breaks out into some ditty, the theme of which is either love or war. The only accompaniment is a rude guitar with two strings. Although nothing can be further removed from our idea of melody, yet their sentiment and expression are admirably suited to the scenes they describe, and are also strikingly illustrative of the peculiar character of their minds. Combinations the most harsh and rugged form the most striking feature of their music; as often when their movements are grave and slow, as when they are brisk and lively. In the former, they frequently exhibit much grave and melancholy thought; in the latter they sometimes spring up simultaneously, and join, to the utmost extent of their voices, in a full chorus.

One trait in the Arab character, of special interest, is a nice sense of honour. This trait shows itself in their universal hospitality. This has come down to them from of old. In their lofty poetry, which will bear a comparison with that of any other people, they laud and extol that Arab who consumes his substance to entertain strangers. Nor can they speak of one in higher terms, than to say, "The fire never goes out on his kitchen hearth, but is always burn-

ing to cook for the stranger, his guest." "Dis-mount from your horse in the desert, and enter the Arab's tent," says the Rev. Eli Smith, "and he will entertain you as Abraham did of old, if not with the fatted calf, yet with the lamb or kid, with milk and butter; for to be economical on the score of food, is, with the Arabs, the height of meanness. This makes the Arab generous, and thus a feeling of sacredness attaches to the character of guest. Some few are treacherous; but if you want to pass alone through the desert of Arabia, you will be told there is no difficulty: 'we will pass you over to a tribe that is friendly with us, and they will pass you on to one that is friendly with them, and so you will go safely through.' " "When we were at Jerusalem," says a late traveller, "wishing to visit the region of the Dead Sea, which was infested by a band of Bedouins, regarded as robbers, we consulted a native friend, and the next day he brought us the captain of the band for our guide. We visited Bethlehem, and slept where Jacob slept at Bethel, and returned in safety."

Still there is a numbering of the hours of hospitality. For three days and eight hours the stranger is "a ward," and after that merely "a visitor." He is not, however, required to depart, but is expected, if his stay be prolonged, to assist in fetching water, milking the camel, or feeding the horse. Should he refuse those

domestic services, he may be allowed to remain, but he will be censured for ingratitude. He is, however, at perfect liberty to go to another tent, where he will not fail to receive a fresh welcome; and in a long journey he may change his tent from time to time till he reaches the place to which he is travelling.

When a man of rank happens to be a visitor, a kid or a lamb is prepared; an inferior guest is regaled with coffee, or bread and melted butter. Sometimes an entire sheep is roasted, a hole being dug in the sand and lined with heated stones, in which the flesh is laid, and then covered all over with cinders and the wet skin of the animal. The meat is cooked in an hour and a half, and, as all the juices are preserved, it has an excellent flavour.

As it was said of Ishmael, "his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him," so it may be declared of his descendants in the desert. An Arab considers plunder as his right. He does not say, "I robbed," but "I gained." He is even said to justify his conduct on the ground of Sarah's cruelty to the mother of Ishmael.

Robbery is a systematized profession among the Bedouins, and no disgrace is attached to its exercise indiscriminately upon enemies, friends, neighbours, or even the inmates of their own tents. When the expedition is distant, in order that the horses may be fresh for the onset, the horseman goes to the scene of action

mounted, with another, on a camel, and leading his horse. When the party is on foot, they carry with them a small stock of flour, salt, and water, and are clothed in rags, to make their ransom less in case they are taken. They steal upon the camp in the night, and then it is the business of one to rouse the watch-dogs, and draw them away from their charge in the pursuit. Another then cuts the cords that bind the legs of the camels, and they instantly rise, as is their custom, and walk noiselessly away; a third stands at the tent door, with a heavy bludgeon, to strike down any one passing out to interfere. As many as fifty camels are often stolen in this way, and marched to a safe distance in a night. The three principal actors in the affair are entitled to a larger share than the rest. If the robber should be seized, the custom of ages has given him a right to the protection of any third person whom he can touch, even by the intervention of any thing inanimate, or by spitting or throwing a stone, upon exclaiming, "I am thy protected." To avoid this privilege is an important object with the captor. He demands of the prisoner wherefore he has come? The common answer is, "I came to rob. God has overthrown me." The captor then binds him, and beats him until he exclaims, Yeneffa! "I renounce," i. e., the benefit of protection; but as this is only valid for a day, the prisoner is placed in a hole dug in the ground, his feet

chained, his hands tied, and his hair twisted to two stakes; the pit is covered with tent poles and sacks, leaving a small aperture for breathing. This severe usage does not extort a ransom immediately, as he may yet escape if he can contrive to spit through the aperture upon a man or a child, or take any food from their hands. Sometimes a mother or sister will enter the camp as a beggar, or in the night, and placing a thread in the captive's mouth, retire to a neighbouring tent, unwinding the clue, until she places the other end in the hand of the owner, who must follow it to the prisoner, and claim him as his protected. He is at once free. His fetters are struck off, and he is entertained as a guest with all the attention of Arab hospitality. Should he fail in this mode of obtaining a release, he conceals his name, professing to be a beggar, and sometimes enduring this treatment for months to avoid paying a ransom. He is, however, generally discovered, and forced to purchase his liberty by the surrender of his whole property in horses, camels, and sheep, tents, provisions, and baggage.

On the coast where coffee is shipped, nothing but the most severe punishments can preserve it from pillage. At Shagra, the sheik having taken an Arab pilfering from a bale of coffee, directed his hand to be cut off, and put into the place of the stolen coffee, and the hole was then mended, and the bale sent off.

Wellsted relates that, in returning from an excursion to the mountains, it was necessary to descend a steep and precipitous defile, which barely afforded space for the feet, and obliged them to dismount and lead the asses on which they had been riding. When about half way down he was astonished to see their Arab guide mount his beast. Upon remonstrating with him upon his wanton exposure of himself to what appeared certain death, the Arab answered, "God is great, and I am tired," and, contrary to all expectation, accomplished the remainder of the descent in safety.

In such acts the Arabs are most adroit and audacious. The defenceless traveller is waylaid, seized, and stripped of every thing; but unless he resist, or shed the blood of a Bedouin, his life is safe. They spring behind the horseman, seize him with one hand, and with the other rifle him of his money. Even while the French officers in Egypt were sleeping, they stole their swords from their sides, and purloined clothes and other valuable articles placed beneath their heads. A sort of kinship is sometimes claimed with their victim. "Undress thyself," exclaims the assailant, as he rides furiously up to the traveller, "thy aunt" (his own wife) "is without a garment." A reproach for plunder receives the haughty reply, "You forget that I am an Arab."

On the pirate coast of the Persian Gulf, the Arab, from time immemorial, has exercised his

vocation of robber on the sea instead of the desert—his hand has been heavy against every man who has fallen into his power, and he, in turn, has felt some retribution. In 1808 the English ship *Sylph* was captured by two of their vessels containing four hundred men. They had just commenced the massacre of their prisoners when the ship-of-war *Nereid* came up, and seeing how affairs stood, immediately fired into and sunk the Arab vessels with all on board. The merchant ship *Minerva* was taken by a large fleet of pirate vessels, after a desperate defence. The captain, knowing the cruel fate reserved for them, attempted to blow up his ship, but failed, and the slaughter commenced. The ship was first purified with water and perfumes, and this being accomplished, the different individuals were bound and brought forward singly to the gangway, where one of the pirates deliberately murdered them, with the exclamation they use in slaying cattle, “*Alla Akbar*,” (God is great!) They in fact considered them as a propitiatory sacrifice to their prophet. When taken prisoners themselves, and asked what treatment they looked for, their reply was, “The same immediate death we should have inflicted on you.” In 1809 they were supposed to possess more than one hundred vessels of from two hundred to four hundred tons, and they kept the whole coast of Arabia, the entrance to the Red Sea and the northern shores of India, in

constant state of alarm. They were, in 1819, severely chastised by the English power in India, and have been kept in check ever since. Should this force be withdrawn, they would immediately renew their ancient depredations. That their disposition is not changed, is shown by an occurrence of as recent a date as ten years. A pirate of the Beni As tribe seized and plundered an Indian vessel trading to Bushir. A few days after the sloop-of-war Elphinstoe came in sight. The pirate made no attempt to avoid her, expecting to have carried her by boarding, and it was not until a broadside of round and grape-shot from the sloop's thirty-two-pounders had passed within a few yards of them, through their frail ship, with dreadful carnage, that they were aware of their hopeless inferiority. The Arab captain was tried in India, and sentenced to fourteen years transportation, a punishment perfectly incomprehensible to his tribe, and exciting their revenge much beyond what had happened in battle. They threatened to retaliate, by boiling in oil the first European who fell into their power.

Individual followers are always ready to flock in considerable numbers to the standard of some successful sheik, who promises either daring adventure or rich booty. Hence it is no difficult matter to collect some thousands of freebooters, sufficient to lay under contribution all who pass by the route near which they hover. On that between Egypt and Palestine,

the borders of Syria, and the tract along the Euphrates, large moving encampments continually pass to and fro, observing the progress of the traveller and the caravan, and ready to avail themselves of any favourable juncture. In the interior, among the Bedouin camps, this warlike temper vents itself in almost perpetual petty quarrels with each other. Twice only men of powerful and aspiring genius have succeeded in uniting together these multitudinous tribes, who then formed armies which the mightiest kingdoms of Asia attempted in vain to resist. These irruptions, however, were only transient; and even that of the followers of Mohammed, though it altered the aspect of the rest of the world, left Arabia itself almost wholly unchanged.

A curious instance of demands on travellers occurred to Mr. Carne and his companions. It is thus stated:—"We were stopped at the post of the well-known Abou Gosh. It was a hamlet, consisting of several dwellings, where this man, who is the chieftain of the small district around, as well as lawgiver, dictator, and sometimes, it is shrewdly said, freebooter, resides. He exacts a tribute as his undoubted right from all travellers who pass this way; and our horses were soon surrounded by this chief and his soldiers, who began to talk loud and fast. It was some minutes before we could understand a word of what they said: we dismounted, however, and sat down on the

grass, while one of the soldiers was directed to bring some coffee; and we were asked to stay and partake of some more solid refreshment, but, as we knew we should have to pay about ten times the value of the chief's hospitality, and as the dwellings had a villanously dirty appearance, we thought it best to decline the offer.

“Abou Gosh, who did not in the mean time neglect his interests, pulled out a slip of paper from his pocket, with an air of deep importance; and with much earnest exclamation, he placed it in our hands, as an all-sufficient authority for his demands. The wily chief protested, that, though he did not altogether comprehend its import, he had no doubt it gave him a claim on the purses of all Frank travellers. On perusing this extraordinary certificate, which was of very small dimensions, we could not help laughing heartily. Abou, who, though a great rogue, was a very handsome fellow, stroked his chin with his hand, fixed his eyes attentively on us, with a look of ludicrous importance, while my servant explained to him its meaning. It was written in English by a reverend gentleman, who, in the career of his mission for the fallen people of Israel, had passed that way, and certified to two individuals, his intimate friends, who are eminent for their wealth as well as zeal, and were at this time safe in their comfortable and luxurious homes in England, to this effect, that when they should come to

this wild pass, on their way to Jerusalem, they were to be exempted from paying any tax to Abou Gosh. They were addressed in full, with the title of esquires, and were assured that their reverend friend had received the most honourable treatment at the hands of the said worthy and well meaning Abou.

“The perusal of such a document in such a place ; the exquisite care taken of it by the chief, than whom no moss-trooper was ever a greater thief, and the purpose to which he applied it, were irresistibly laughable. Abou did not relish our reception of his document, any more than we did the longing looks cast on our baggage by himself and his lawless, well-armed attendants. However, after a great deal of clamour and altercation, and the payment of a sufficient fee for the privilege of passing his small territory, we were allowed to depart, after having finished a cup of coffee, and repeated our assurances to the “respectable Abou Gosh,” that his document gave him no right to demand money of Frank travellers who might pass that way in future, which he answered only by a significant and unbelieving look, depositing it carefully once more in his bosom.”

There is no security from plunder in speaking the same language, or even in professing the same religion. The caravan on its pilgrimage to Mecca is considered to offer as lawful a booty as the bales of the rich merchant ; or the stores of one who is accounted an infidel stranger.

It must not be supposed, however, that the Arabs are always successful in their hostile enterprises. The instances are many in which their attempts at plunder have been repelled or followed with fierce retaliation. Mr. Carne describes his being held captive by Hassan, a chief of the Bedouins, in his desolate valley, and of his subsequently suffering a great and even fatal reverse.

A caravan, it appears, was proceeding from Mocha to Cairo. It was rich and very numerous, loaded with coffee and spices, and other articles, and composed of a large number of merchants and attendants. To attack it was not difficult in a country filled with rocks and ravines, especially with so good a look-out as the Arabs generally keep. Had it been otherwise, obstacles, though great, would have been surmounted; for the position in which these Bedouins lived was so remote from the track of the few caravans that came, that they seldom had an opportunity of obtaining any thing valuable. The present caravan offered a rich booty, of which they had gained accurate intelligence, probably from some of the Arabs of other tribes who acted as guides; and they waited the moment of plunder with great anxiety and high-raised hopes.

Much resistance was not anticipated, as it was known the caravan was travelling with a weak guard; and the numerous attendants and guides, as well as their masters, were more

likely to fly than fight. As, however, the intended assailants were by no means remarkable for bravery, they took every precaution to insure success, and made numbers answer the purpose of courage. By day and by night did the camel of Hassan bear his master to the dwelling-places of other sheiks, in order to mature the plan of attack and acquire the needed force. And a strong muster was ultimately made, as Carne says, of "all the rogues and thieves" in the camp of the chief, and "they were not a few;" and it included also all the spare forces from two or three friendly camps in the same region, though at some distance.

They left their own dwellings beyond the region of Tor without delay, and proceeded, after several days' march, to the other side of the Red Sea. This circuitous route, in which they passed near Suez, brought them into the very track which the caravan was obliged to make in proceeding from Mocha. They took up their position at some distance among high and rocky hills, which effectually screened them from every human eye; and here they waited with true Arab avidity and patience the arrival of the object of their pursuit. At length the caravan was seen at a distance slowly advancing over the desert; the long trains of camels, the greater part heavily laden, marching with little order, and scattered over the sand; and the merchants riding in groups, or keeping beside their individual effects,—all



ARAB ROBBERS.

unsuspicious of impending danger, not only because no spoilers dwelt there, but because it was near the pasha's seat of government.

No sooner, however, did the caravan reach a part of the desert favourable to attack, than suddenly and unexpectedly the Bedouins rushed out, the greater part of the merchants and guides took to flight, and a large booty was captured by the assailants. As spoil was their chief object, they offered no violence or injury to the people. The few merchants, who were more tenacious than the rest, remained with their goods, and had their entreaties, that a part at least might be spared, answered with threats and laughter. The others fled, either mounted or on foot, as fast as they could go, bitterly lamenting the destruction of their hopes of gain, or their being plunged from affluence (having embarked their whole fortune in the venture) into abject poverty.

A strange contrast was presented by the Bedouins. Marching rapidly by night and day, though encumbered with their booty, they arrived in safety at their desert and almost inaccessible camp. To men whose daily luxuries were bounded by dry coarse cakes and coffee, the valuable articles now in their hands presented a rich and rare prize. The usual dress of the wives of Hassan consisted only of the coarse white cotton garments worn in common by the whole tribe, a short tunic with the neck open, and a hood thrown over the head; but

how their eyes must have sparkled at the sight of the shawls and rich stuffs spread out before them, and at the turbans,—a splendid decoration they had never known! There were articles, too, whose firmness of texture and dazzling colours would have attracted attention even in the streets of the capital: the feelings of those who shared the plunder in these remote solitudes, then, cannot easily be described.

The spoil was enough, in fact, to have outlasted Hassan's day, and those also who came after him. But there was some cause for apprehension. The fugitives had found their way to Cairo, and made their complaint, and the pasha, deeply incensed at such "an outrage," as he termed it, in his dominions, doubtless thinking of the duties on the goods, of which he had been deprived by the plunder, sent out a body of troops against the offenders. The Bedouins defended themselves stoutly, but in an action with the Turkish soldiers, Hassan, with several other sheiks, was taken prisoner. Mr. Carne saw them brought as captives into Cairo, and in a few weeks after they were put to death.

The deserts of Arabia, and the freebooters that traverse it, may still exhibit to the view a marvellous fulfilment of a prediction recorded many ages ago in the sacred page. Let no one, however, suppose that this fact militates against the free agency of man, or at all affects the moral character of his actions. All events are

foreknown to the Omniscient ; and it is with Him to inspire a record of any of them, according to the good pleasure of his will. But neither the one nor the other alter, in any degree, the accountability of the parties concerned. Every one must give account of himself to God of the things done in the body, and it is enough for us to know that the final decision will be that of Him who cannot err.

From June to September, these people are engaged in the pearl fishery ; which is computed to employ above four thousand boats and thirty thousand men, producing pearls to the amount of two millions of dollars annually. All share in the profits, and when they are upon the pearl banks divide themselves into two parties, one to dive, and the other to haul up the divers ; these, having a small basket, stand on a stone suspended by a rope, which is lowered to the bottom. Where the oysters are numerous, eight or ten are taken at each dive. The diver descends from thirty to ninety feet, and is hauled up quickly when the rope is jerked, remaining under water a minute to a minute and a half. The Arab pilot of an English vessel who had been diving for oysters unsuccessfully, said, "I will now, since I cannot gather oysters, dive to catch fish." All ridiculed the idea, but, in a short time, to their great astonishment, he rose to the surface with a small rock-fish in each hand. He had seated himself on the bottom, and caught the fish as they nibbled at his

skin, thus acting the part of both bait and hook! This occupation shortens the lives of the divers, and in it they are exposed to the attack of sharks and saw-fish, by which latter they have been sometimes cut in two.

The Mohammedanism of these sons of the desert sits very loosely upon them. Their indifference may be inferred from such sentiments as these: "In the desert," say the Bedouins, "we have no water; how then can we make the prescribed ablutions? We have no money, and how can we bestow alms? Why should we fast in the Ramadan, since the whole year is with us one continual abstinence? And if God be present everywhere, why should we go to Mecca to adore him?" They bear the name of followers of the false prophet, and the few ideas of religion they possess are moulded after his precepts; but they manifest little attachment to it in itself, and live in the habitual neglect of most of its external forms. The impostor adapted his system to them, but the Bedouins know hardly any thing of it. Few of them at the present time can read the Koran; and though it prescribes a penalty for those who do not say their prayers five times a day, scarcely one in a hundred knows enough to say them. Dr. Robinson states that he never saw any among them repeat the usual Moslem prayers, in which others are commonly so punctual; he was told, indeed, that many never attempt it, and that very few among them were acquainted

with the proper words and forms of prayer. It is, however, a striking fact, that while all nominal Christians in the east have prayers in an unknown tongue, they have theirs in Arabic. The men generally observe the feast called Ramadân, though some do not; nor do the females keep it.

It may be remarked, that a promise was given to the descendants of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, of the family of Jethro, in the days of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you, therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever."* Jonadab had commanded his sons not to drink wine nor build houses, nor to have vineyard nor seed, but to dwell in tents. These commands they have strictly obeyed, and the promise of God has been remembered. The Rechabites exist as a separate people, and are called by the same name. They are excellent horsemen, and seem to fly through the desert with the speed of the wind.

A missionary describes a most interesting scene which took place when some of the descendants of the ancient Rechabites found their way into his apartment. These Bedouin Is-

* Jer. xxxv. 18, 19.

raelites retained the faith of the Old Testament amidst the wild and desultory habits of the Arab; but their habits were peaceable; and though they tilled no land, nor planted, nor drank of the vine, they were a regular and well-ordered community. To the missionary all this was a source of inexpressible interest; he listened with rapt attention to the simple yet clear details of these men of the wilderness, who spake of Heber the Kenite, whose wife slew Sisera, as the founder of their race, and stated that, in a hot and thirsty land, they had continued faithful to the command, to drink no wine, for near three thousand years. About three hundred years since, a great number of the Rechabites were driven from Yemen. Some of them are now found near the Gulf of Arabia. It appears, indeed, as if there were written on every page of Arabia's extended history, and graven upon every rock in her deserts, with a pen more powerful than iron, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

A remarkable change in the history of Arabia was effected by Abdel Wahabe, of the pastoral tribe of Temin, and of the clan called El Wahabe, of which his father was sheik. He was born in 1691, and on visiting, in his youth, the principal cities of the east, he was convinced that Islamism had become very corrupt, and determined to undertake its reformation. His talents and learning secured

for him respect, and he soon made converts by his writings and his reputation for wisdom.

The system which he originated makes the chief the political and religious ruler of his people. It takes as a fundamental principle the unity of God. It holds Mohammed to have been merely a mortal man, but intrusted



BOWING IN THE EAST.

with a divine mission. It inculcates a strict adherence to the Koran. It declares the sinfulness of invoking the intercession of departed saints, and of doing especial honour to their remains. It requires the observance of the ordinary rites of Mohammedanism,—the number of the prayers, the genuflexions, the fast of the

Ramadân,—and abstinence from wine and all spirituous liquors.

About the year 1746, while quietly disseminating his doctrines, Wahab was ordered by the governor of the province to leave his native village, of which for eight years he had been the sheik. Escaping from the poniard of an assassin, he received protection from another sheik, belonging to the Aeneze tribe. Among this people his efforts were so successful, that he gained, like the impostor whom he followed, much physical force. The ordinary stimulants of Mohammedanism were employed; conquest was declared to be highly meritorious, and a share of the spoil was a present reward. Some of the hordes scattered over the central wastes yielded to his arms, while others rejected all the authority he assumed.

It appears that the only character he proposed to sustain was that of an ecclesiastical ruler, but it was certainly one that blended the qualities of the politician and the warrior. He died at the age of ninety-five, much renowned among his people (called after him the Wahabees) for his powers of persuasion and for his captivating eloquence. His success appears from the fact, that he gathered converts to his views from various tribes of the desert, into a distinct people, under the civil government of Eben Send in civil matters, and his own as their Iman, or spiritual ruler.

He was succeeded by those who pursued the

same course, and for a time the Wahabees did not encroach on the rights of the governments nearest them in Bagdad and Hejaz. The pilgrim-caravans passed through their country unmolested, but afterwards they exacted a tax from all Persian devotees that crossed the desert. Inflamed by various circumstances, Solyman Pasha at length despatched against them a great force. The Wahabee chief had prepared for the attack, but it did not take place, though the two armies continued for three days within sight of each other. A truce for six years was now concluded, and both parties returned to their homes.

On the Turks, the Wahabees now looked with contempt. The peace was broken, and in 1801, Send, at the head of twenty thousand men, attacked Kerbela, and carried it by a fearful assault. Here was a magnificent tomb or mosque, which they were eager to destroy. Over it was suspended a huge pearl; near it lay twenty thousand sabres, mounted with precious stones; and these, with vases, lamps, articles of gold and silver, and rubies, emeralds, and diamonds, became the properties of the leader. Abundant, too, was the spoil for his force, and in five days the city was a heap of smoking ruins.

Soon after, Mecca itself was captured, and here the Wahabees established their power, in lieu of that of the sultan, who had been previously regarded as the head and protector of

the faithful. The residence of Send was now fixed at Dreich, where he occupied a palace and lived in all the splendour of an eastern prince. In 1803 and 1804, he made unsuccessful attacks on Bagdad and Bassora, but took Medina in the latter year, and in the following Jidda, which had formerly baffled all his attempts to subdue it. The Porte was now obliged to pay a heavy tribute for permission to send an escort to Damascus, with the caravans of pilgrims, that annually proceeded to Mecca, but it was required by the Wahabees that the caravans should no longer have weapons, flags, or music, and that they should not enter the holy city, as they had been accustomed to do, on carpets. In 1807, they stood in the zenith of their power, but since then, they have been repeatedly repulsed. Some writers have lamented this fact, supposing that their success was identified with the progress of a purer system than that of "the impostor." But the reform produced by the Wahabees was but slight; they left untouched the impious doctrines of Islamism, and they were as intolerant and sanguinary, if not more so, than Mohammed's earliest followers.

CHAPTER VII.

CEREMONIES AT MECCA—DECLINE OF THE PILGRIMAGE—
STATE AND CHARACTER OF THE ARABS.

THE Mohammedan world must be considered as comprising all who acknowledge the mission of Mohammed and the authority of the Koran. There are, however, within these limits, great diversities of creed and practice. The Papal faith does not differ more widely from that of the reformed churches, than the Mohammedan of the Persian sects does from those of Arabia and Turkey, who are the most strict.

The ritual analogy of Mohammedanism to Judaism is observable throughout its institutions. The legal postures of the ritual are Jewish; its fasts and festivals are adopted from the Jewish calendar; the pilgrimage to Mecca has some resemblance to the ascent to Jerusalem; and Islamism has also its great national sacrifice, its "passover," and its "high priest." The sacrificial rites performed during the pilgrimage to Mecca, as well as the pilgrimage itself, and the honours paid to the Kaaba, with its black stone, and the other sacred places, were, however, of immemorial usage

among the Arabians, and were adopted by Mohammed in accommodation to the ancient customs of his country. The great basis of this system is found in the misrepresentations of tradition and the reveries of the Rabbins.

The central truth of the Christian system, the death of Christ upon the cross, is not simply rejected by the Mohammedan creed, but the very fact of his having been actually crucified is denied. The absurd legend substituted for the great truth of the gospel was not, however, invented by Mohammed, it was derived from the heretical teachers who arose in the earliest age of the church. The resurrection of Christ, a doctrine inseparably connected with the death of the adorable Redeemer, is also, by consequence, and in fact, denied by the followers of Mohammed. Thus Islamism rejects the only sure foundation of a sinner's hope, while it shuts out from view the love of God, and holds up no perfect example as the object at once of homage and imitation. It requires no repentance, it produces no contrition; alms-deeds, punctuality in the repetition of prayers, and, above all, valour in the field, are the "refuges of lies" it offers to its adherents. It provides no means of regeneration, nor indeed supposes it to be possible in the present world. As it reveals no Saviour, no Mediator, so it discovers no Sanctifier, no Comforter. Alike destitute of internal evidence as of external authority, it bears the broad marks of

that wisdom which descendeth not from above, but is "earthly, sensual, devilish." Originating in imposture, and propagated by violence, the fruits it has borne have been pride and intolerance, impurity and fanaticism.

A large part of the religion of the Moslems consisted, for a long period, in the pilgrimage to Mecca. It is expressly commanded by the Koran; and, according to a tradition of Mohammed, he who expires without performing it, may as well die a Jew or a Christian. A short sketch of this practice, so long continued, will therefore be desirable.

At a certain distance from the Holy City, all pilgrims are required to strip themselves naked, throwing away their garments, and put on the *ihram*, or *ehram*, two pieces of linen or cotton cloth, generally white, one of them wrapped round the loins, the other thrown loosely over the neck and shoulders, while the head remains wholly uncovered. Burckhardt at once complied with this custom, which has occasioned the death of many; for when the pilgrimage happens in winter, the assumption of the *ihram* is extremely prejudicial to the most robust constitution, more especially to that of the northern Moslems, who have been accustomed to thick woollen clothes; "yet," says Burckhardt, "the religious zeal of some is so ardent, that if they arrive several months previous, they vow, on taking the *ihram*, not to throw it off till after the completion of their

pilgrimage to Arafat." It is said that Haroun-al-Raschid and his wife Zobeyda once performed the pilgrimage on foot from Bagdad to Mecca, clothed only with the *ihram*; but indulged in the luxury of walking on splendid carpets the whole way.

On entering Mecca, the temple or mosque must be immediately visited, whether the stranger be a pilgrim or not. The prescribed ceremonies are, first, to repeat certain prayers in different parts of the temple; then to begin the towaf, or walk round the Kaaba seven times, kissing the black stone at each circuit; then to proceed to the well of Zemzem, and drink as much water as they wish or can get. The second ceremony, which the pilgrim has to perform, is, to proceed to the hill of Szafa, and there repeat certain prescribed prayers, before he sets out on "the holy walk," which is along a level spot, about six hundred paces in length, terminating at a stone platform, called Meroua. This walk, which in certain places must be a run, is to be repeated seven times, the pilgrim reciting prayers uninterruptedly, with a loud voice, the whole time. The third ceremony is that of shaving the head, and walking to the Omra, about one hour and a half from Mecca, chanting ejaculations all the way. The two former ceremonies must, after this, be again repeated. The walk round the Kaaba seven times may be repeated as often as the pilgrim thinks fit,

and the more frequently the more meritorious it is considered by these superstitious people.

About seventy thousand persons assembled at Mecca, when Burckhardt made his pilgrimage, and submitted to the performance of these ceremonies. This is the least number which the Moslems told Ali Bey there must necessarily be assembled at every pilgrimage, on Mount Arafat; and that in case any deficiency should occur, angels are sent down from heaven to complete the number,—an affecting proof of the gross ignorance in which the Moslems are involved.

Bartherma states the Cairo caravan, when he was at Mecca, to have amounted to sixty-four thousand camels. In 1814, the same caravan consisted mostly of Mohammed Ali's troops, with very few pilgrims. But Burckhardt says, that in 1816, a single grandee of Cairo was there with one hundred and ten camels, for the transport of his baggage and retinue, whose travelling expenses alone, he supposes, could not have been less than fifty thousand dollars. Vast numbers of Bedouins used to flock to Mecca at the time of the pilgrimage, and others from every part of Arabia. Many of these pilgrims depend entirely for subsistence, both on the journey and at Mecca, on begging; others bring some small productions from their respective countries for sale.

The Moggrebys, for example, bring their red bonnets, and woollen cloaks; the Euro-

pean Turks, shoes and slippers, hardware, embroidered stuffs, sweetmeats, amber, trinkets of European manufacture, knit silk purses, etc.; the Turks of Anatolia bring carpets, silks, and Angora shawls; the Persians, Cashmere shawls and large silk handkerchiefs; the Afghans, tooth-brushes made of the spongy boughs of a tree growing in Bokhara, beads of a yellow soapstone, and plain coarse shawls, manufactured in their own country; the Indians, the numerous productions of their rich and extensive region; the people of Yemen, snakes for the Persian pipes, sandals, and various other works in leather; and the Africans bring divers articles adapted to the slave trade.



ARAB MERCHANTS.

When all the required ceremonies have been gone through at Mecca, the whole concourse of pilgrims repair together on a certain day to Mount Arafat, some on camels, some on mules, or asses, but the greater number barefooted, this being considered the most meritorious way of performing a journey of eighteen or twenty miles. "We were several hours," says Burckhardt, "before we could reach the outskirts of the town, so great was the crowd of camels. Of the half-naked pilgrims, all dressed in the white ihram, some sat on their camels, mules, or asses, reading the Koran, some ejaculated loud prayers, while others abused their drivers, and quarrelled with those near them, who were choking up the passages. Having cleared a narrow pass in the mountains, the plain of Arafat opened out. Here the different caravans began to disperse in search of places to pitch their tents. Pilgrims were seen in every direction wandering among the tents in search of their companions, whom they had lost in the confusion along the road; and it was several hours before the noise and clamour had subsided."

In the morning Burckhardt ascended the summit of Mount Arafat, from whence he counted about three thousand tents, dispersed over the plain, of which two-thirds belonged to the two pilgrim caravans, and to the suite and soldiers of Mohammed Ali; "but the greater number of the assembled multitudes

were," says our traveller, "like myself, without tents." Those of the wife of Mohammed Ali, the mother of Tousoun and Ibrahim Pasha, were magnificent, the transport of her baggage alone from Jidda to Mecca having required five hundred camels.

Her tent was, in fact, an encampment, consisting of a dozen tents of different sizes, inhabited by her women, the whole enclosed by a wall of linen cloth, eight hundred paces in circuit, the single entrance of which was guarded by eunuchs in splendid dresses. Around this enclosure were pitched the tents of the men, who formed her numerous suite. The beautiful embroidery on the exterior of this linen palace, with the various colours displayed in every part of it, constituted an object which reminded the traveller of some descriptions in the Arabian Tales of a Thousand and One Nights.

Burckhardt says, he estimated the number of persons assembled on the plain at seventy thousand; and it is deserving of remark, that he is the third traveller who mentions the same number. This enormous mass, after washing and purifying the body according to law, or going through the motions where water was not to be had, now pressed forward towards the mountain of Arafat, and covered its sides from top to bottom. At the appointed hour, the Cadi of Mecca took his stand on a stone platform on the top of the mountain, and began

his sermon, to which the multitude appeared to listen in solemn and respectful silence. At every pause, however, the assembled multitudes waved the skirts of their ihrams over their heads, and rent the air with the shouts of "Lebeyk, allahuma, lebeyk!"—"Here we are at thy command, O God!" "During the waving of the ihrams," says Burckhardt, "the side of the mountain, thickly crowded as it was by the people in their white garments, had the appearance of a cataract of water; while the green umbrellas, with which several thousand pilgrims, sitting on their camels below, were provided, bore some resemblance to a verdant plain."

As the sun descended behind the western mountains, the Cadi shut his book: instantly the crowd rushed down the mountains; the tents were struck, and the whole mass of pilgrims moved forward across the plain, on their return. Thousands of torches were now lighted; volleys of artillery and of musketry were fired; sky-rockets innumerable were let off; the pasha's band of music played till they arrived at a place called Mezdelfe, when every one lay down on the bare ground, where he could find a spot. Here another sermon was preached, commencing with the early dawn and continuing till the first rays of the sun appeared, when the multitude again moved forward, with a slow pace, to Wady Muna, about three miles off, to perform another foolish ceremony.

After it had occupied about two days, in the valley of Muna, there took place a sacrifice of animals, some brought by the several pilgrims, others purchased from the Bedouins on the occasion. The throats of these animals must always be cut with their faces towards the Kaaba. At the pilgrimage in question, the number of sheep thus slaughtered is represented as small, amounting only to six or eight thousand!

The feast being ended, all the pilgrims had their heads shaved, threw off the ihram, and resumed their ordinary clothing; a larger fair was now held, the valley blazed all night with illuminations, bonfires, the discharge of artillery and fire-works; and the pilgrims then returned to Mecca. Many of the poorer, however, remained to feast on the offals of the slaughtered sheep. At Mecca, the ceremonies of the Kaaba and the Drura were again to be repeated, and then the hadji was thought to be truly performed. Burekhardt makes no mention of any females visiting Arafat, though Ali Bey talks of two thousand. The Mohammedan law prescribes, that no unmarried woman shall perform the pilgrimage; and that even every married woman must be accompanied by her husband, or at least by a very near relation; the Shaffay sect does not even allow the latter.

It appears that the pilgrimage to Mecca has of late years greatly declined in attraction.

The educated Moslems are mostly of the sect of Mohammed Ali of Egypt. That this, however, is but the exchange of one evil system for another is lamentably evident. "A long residence," says Burckhardt, "among Turks, Syrians and Egyptians, justifies me in deducing that they are wholly deficient in virtue, honour, and justice, and that honesty is only to be found in their paupers or idiots." The Bedouins are increasingly careless as to the performance of pilgrimage; comparatively few now make the journey to Mecca.

According to Rev. Dr. Robinson, were a missionary to go among some of the Arab tribes, speaking their language and acquainted with their habits, he would doubtless be received with kindness; and were he to live as they live, and conform to their manners and customs in unimportant things, he would soon acquire influence and authority among them. In all the intercourse of that traveller with them, he found them kind, good-natured, and accommodating, though, as might be expected, great beggars. Their inveterate predilection for the desert stands in the way of their civilization, but the things that are impossible with men are possible with God. Nothing short of Divine power can overturn habits and modes of life which have come down to them through nearly forty centuries unchanged.

The Rev. Eli Smith, who has laboured among them, has been greatly interested by

some traits of Arab character, among which are a nice sense of honour and a generous disposition. As to the vindictiveness of the Bedouin, he says, "he is not naturally blood-thirsty. But he is jealous of his rights, and it has been considered, from time immemorial, a sacred duty to avenge the blood of a relative. It is this feeling which gives them a decided character for independence, a trait possessed even by menial servants, who stand up and raise their voice in the presence of their masters. This was shown when one of the Syrian bishops threatened to excommunicate those Arabs who came to hear us preach. The consequence was that next Sabbath our chapel was fuller than ever.

"That the Arab possesses great force of character no one can doubt who is acquainted with ancient history. But we see the same character developed now. We see it in the contrast between the Turks under the sultan, and the Arabs under Mohammed Ali. See, too, how difficult it is for the French, with all their tactics, to subdue the brave Arabs under Abd-el-Kader, in the province of Algiers. Another proof of this independence and bravery was shown by the Druse Arabs. A small party had rebelled and fled to a volcanic region, called Lija, or the Asylum, near which I have myself travelled. Here these Druses planted themselves, and forty thousand of the pasha's troops could not dislodge them. A

single Druse is said to have defended a defile against five hundred men."

There is much, also, to admire in the patience, perseverance, and endurance of the Arabs. The Bedouin considers it degrading to cultivate the soil; he would rather wander in the desert. And how does he live? On most meagre fare; he will start in the morning with a few pounds of meal, and a small quantity of water. If he find no more when that is gone, he will endure hunger and thirst, and the severest privations, rather than complain. "I once encountered," says Mr. Smith, "a party who had been driven out of their territory, and were approaching Palestine in search of pasture for their flocks. So far as appeared, a few milch camels only furnished them food. I offered one of them a biscuit, and a cup of milk; and they offered to exchange more. We gave them some barley which we had brought for our horses: and they ground it husks and all, made it into a sort of dough on a sheep-skin, buried it in the ashes and baked it. When they took it out it was burned as black as a coal; yet they ate it with a good relish. Bread baked in this way, with camel's dung for fuel, is ordinary fare! Sanctify this trait in their character, and what devoted missionaries, what sufferers for Christ's sake, what noble martyrs they would make!

"Another trait in the Arab character is,

that he is not disposed to infidelity. Just before going with Mr. Dwight to Armenia, I found it stated in the publication of a Jesuit missionary that the Armenian is religiously inclined. I have since studied the Arab character with reference to this point, and found it true also of them ; for while their neighbours, the Greeks, grow up and go over to infidelity, you will scarcely find any infidels among the Arabs. Indeed, you cannot insult an Arab more than by calling him an infidel."

The Arabic language, (a part of an important family of languages,) in the abundance of its roots, the variety of its formations, and the delicacy of its construction, stands prominent among all its sisters. Its purity and copiousness were long an object of national pride. When, after the first conquests of the Moham-medans, its correctness seemed to be endangered, through intercourse with strangers, grammarians arose to fix its rules and secure it from corruption. One writer compiled a dictionary of the pure Arabic language ; it contained about 40,000 words, and is still of great value, from the numerous quotations from ancient poems, adduced in illustration. The Arabic language is adapted to every class of composition, from the wild and yet noble lyrics of the sons of the desert, to the artless simplicity of their ordinary narratives. Literature and science have alike made it the vehicle of thought and feeling. It has been described as

“the bridging over the wide chasm which intervenes between the extinction of classical literature, and the revival of that spirit to which the literature of all modern languages owes its origin.” Though confined at first within the bounds of the Peninsula, by circumstances to which we owe the preservation of its pure antique form, yet the spread of Mohammedism made it the written and spoken language of the whole of western Asia, of eastern and northern Africa, of Spain, and of some of the islands of the Mediterranean; and the ecclesiastical language of Persia, Turkey, and all other lands which have received the Moslem faith.

As Christianity never attained any extensive or permanent influence among the Arabs as a nation, no entire nor publicly-sanctioned version of the Bible has been discovered.

Political events at length made their language the common vehicle of instruction in the east, and among Jews, Samaritans, and Christians, independent versions of single books were often undertaken, according to the fiat of private persons, or the interests of small communities. As the Arabic language has some relation to the Hebrew, it possesses sufficient analogy to explain and illustrate it, and is of considerable value, from its being a living language in which almost every subject has been discussed. The learned Jews, who flourished in Spain from the tenth to the twelfth

century, under the dominion of the Moors, were the first who applied Arabic to the illustration of the Hebrew language; and subsequent Christian writers have diligently and successfully used the writings of Arabian historians, geographers, and naturalists, in the explanation of the Bible.

It is matter of thankfulness that increased attention is being given to sending forth medical missionaries to people of remote regions, eminently adapted as they are to aid in the spread of the gospel of Christ. And of these Dr. Thompson, stationed at Damascus, describes his being visited by all sects, and among them by some of the chief Moslem families, the true descendants of the prophet. As the result, much prejudice, which has long and greatly prevailed, has been removed. He witnessed the departure of the pilgrims for Mecca, among whom were many Persians, in 1844; and though others in Frank costume were pelted with stones, he and his companions were not in the least molested. Dr. Thompson became the medical adviser of the Kahia Bey, the governor of Damascus, who after being a sufferer for many years, was so grateful for the recovery that ensued, that he sent the physician a present of a young Arab horse. This gift, of course, made a great stir; it was talked of in all directions; and Dr. Thompson thought it had done more to establish him in the confidence of the people than a whole



AN ARAB SCHOOL.

year's hard work would have accomplished. The opportunities for usefulness afforded to medical men of decided and ardent piety, especially in the heathen world, should call forth our earnest prayers that many may be raised up to devote themselves to missionary service.

Unhappily, little has yet been done for the Arab race. The means of education among them are extremely limited, and of a very humble kind. There is, for instance, a village-school for Arab boys in the mountains east of Damascus. A pile of old, strange-looking shoes appears at the door; they are necessary to protect the feet of the scholars as they tread on the rough stones of the mountain parts, but their barelegged-owners squat on the earthen floor, wearing simple dresses and red skull-caps. A missionary vividly pictures the singular scene:—

“The noise has stopped a little, and eyes that should be on their books are gazing on your English dress. No doubt the red skull-caps and gown-like dresses of the Arab boys are equally strange to you. But see, the teacher is putting a speedy end to the brief moment of silence. He will never allow that; he must show off to better advantage before the *houja* (gentleman); so, whip in hand, each blow increases the din. The idlers make amends in clamour for what they have lost in time; those reading aloud read louder, and

those who have no book to read bawl with all their might in imitation of their neighbours. One teacher I have seen give a dose of the *korbaï* (whip) to all, good or bad, dealing a blow and a scold to each, and then sit down quite vain of such a display of his superior excellence as a teacher. The noisy mob before you is really as confused as it seems to be. Classes are things unheard of here. No two boys have the same lesson; few the same book; and many only part of a book, and some none at all. Each one recites alone when he does recite, and the teacher gives just so much attention to the lesson as he can spare from the oversight of the noisy throng before him. So it often happens that the scholar repeats his lesson by rote. He has gone over it so often that he has got it by heart. He will read a psalm with ease in his own book: give him another book with the same psalm on an opposite page, and he cannot find the place. Try him in the alphabet, and he cannot make out one letter from another. Or what would you say to an old man looking through his spectacles on the page which a boy is reading, while his hand is poking at random among the crowd, a cane that reaches half across the room? You may smile, but I have seen the idle fellow watch the strange movements of the long rod, and shun the stroke; while the poor fellow, so intent on his book that he did not see it, got a blow for his pains!"

The time to favour the Arab race shall yet come. In the following expressive strains Isaiah especially predicts the final ingathering of the sons of Ishmael, for Sheba, Kedar, and Nebaioth are all countries of Arabia :—

- “ The multitude of camels shall cover thee,
The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah ;
All they from Sheba shall come :
And they shall bring gold and incense ;
And they shall show forth the praises of the Lord.
- “ All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered unto thee,
The rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee ;
They shall come up with acceptance on mine altar,
And I will glorify the house of my Lord.”
- Isaiah lx. 6, 7.

O SPIRIT of the Living God !
In all thy plenitude of grace,
Where'er the foot of man hath trod,
Descend on our apostate race.

Baptize the nations ; far and nigh
The triumphs of the Cross record ;
The name of Jesus glorify,
Till every kindred call him Lord.

God from eternity hath willed,
All flesh shall his salvation see :
So be the Father's love fulfilled,
The Saviour's sufferings, crowned, through thee !



"May thy wishes be abundantly
fulfilled, whether at evening
tide or in the morning!"

Aug. 14th 1888.

"Forget thee, ne'er shall I."
R. C. B.



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